XIV.—VITA MERIADOCI: AN ARTHURIAN ROMANCE NOW FIRST EDITED FROM THE COTTONIAN MS. FAUSTINA B. VI., OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

I.

INTRODUCTION.

The following edition of the *Vita Meriadoci* is based on an exact transcript of the Cottonian MS.[1] made for me by Mr. F. B. Bickley, of the Department of Manuscripts of the British Museum, during the months of June and July, 1899, and shortly after collated by me with the original MS. The edition is similar in character to that of the other Latin romance, *De Ortu Waluuanii*, contained in the same MS. which appeared in these *Publications* (vol. XIII, No. 3) two years ago. The only particular in which I have departed from the plan of that edition is in regard to the abstract of the story printed at the end, which in this instance can no longer be termed a paraphrase. Further experience in the comparative study of stories of this kind has convinced me that translations and paraphrases are less useful to the student than briefer summaries and I should indeed reproach myself for the length of the present abstract but for the fact that the barbarous character of the language in which it is composed renders a perusal of the Latin text rather tedious to the reader and it accordingly seemed advisable to render the original with a certain amount of detail.

[1] For a description of this MS. see Ward's *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum.* London, 1883–93; vol. I, p. 374. In the transcript the usual contractions were resolved.

II.

Sources.

Like its companion romance, *De Ortu Waluuanii*, the *Vita Meriadoci* is preserved, as far as known, only in the Cottonian MS., Faustina B. VI., and has remained unprinted up to the present time. It was, no doubt, one of the "five Latin romances still existing in manuscript" to which Sir Frederic Madden refers in the Introduction (p. x, note) to his edition of the English romances relating to Sir Gawain, published for the Bannatyne Club in 1839. Two brief notices of the romance, moreover, have since appeared in well known works—viz., Ward's *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts of the British Museum* (vol. I, pp. 374 f.) and San Marte's edition[1] of Geoffrey of Monmouth (pp. 292 f.), but in each instance the abstract of the story is too condensed to give any but a very faint idea of the incidents it embraces. The indications furnished by these notices, however, have been sufficient to suggest to M. Gaston Paris[2] certain just observations with regard to the date of the Latin romance and its independence of the *Chevaliers as Deus Espees*,[3] whose hero bears an identical name. That the source of the Latin story is precisely an Anglo-Norman poem, as M. Paris is inclined to believe, may well be regarded as more open to question.

I propose in the following to take up the discussion of the sources in four divisions:—

I. The story with which the *Vita Meriadoci* begins (pp. 339–357), viz., the murder of Meriadoc's father, the narrow escape of the young prince and his sister from death, their bringing up in the forest and subsequent adventures down to the death of Griffith, is clearly marked off from the

[1] Published at Halle, 1854.

[2] *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, XXX, pp. 245 f.

[3] Edited by Wendelin Förster, Halle, 1877.

remainder of the work, and whilst romantic enough is free from the insipidity and, on the whole, from the extravagance which too often mar the Arthurian romances. Mr. Ward has observed[1] that this part of the romance is "not improbably founded upon a Mabinogi," but adds at the same time that the present version was not written by a Welshman, inasmuch as the author speaks of the mountain *qui Kambrice Snavdone resonat*, whereas *Eryri* is the genuine Welsh name for the range. With regard to the apparently Welsh features of the story it may be remarked that the chief names, at least, are without significance as being in all probability originally unconnected with it. This assertion may be ventured in view of the fact that neither in Welsh history or legend nor in the Arthurian saga generally does anything related of the characters who bear names identical with those we find in the *Vita Meriadoci* at all correspond to the incidents of this romance.

First, the name of Meriadoc is not found as that of any prince or king in the history of Wales.[2] Nor is there any reason to identify the character in our romance with Conan Meriadoc, the hero of Breton legend, as is done by San Marte.[3] The incidents which are related of the latter in Geoffrey of Monmouth (Book V., Chapters 9–15) bear no similarity to those which are related of the hero of the Latin romance and the only connection between them is a partial identity of name. As for the hero of the French romance, *Li Chevaliers as Deus Espees*, M. Gaston Paris has already inferred from the abstract of the *Vita Meriadoci* in Ward's *Catalogue* that the Meriadocs in these two works are totally unconnected and a comparison of the full text of the Latin

[1] *Catalogue of Romances*, I, p. 375.

[2] I have consulted for this purpose *The History of Wales*, by B. B. Woodward, London, 1859,—also those of the early Welsh Chronicles which were accessible to me, viz. the *Annales Cambriae* and *Brut y Tywysogion*..

[3] Edition of Geoffrey of Monmouth, p. 293,—also in his *Arthur = Sage* (Quedlinburg and Leipzig, 1842), p. 36.

work as now published with Förster's abstract of the French poem (Introduction, pp. ii–xxxii) only confirms the correctness of his observation.

Similarly unconnected with Welsh history or legend are the two royal brothers, Caradoc and Griffith. Of the historical Caradocs we have the death of one described in the Gododin poems,[1] a chieftain who perished in the battle of Catraeth. The *Annales Cambriae* and *Brut y Tywysogion*[2] record furthermore the deaths of three Caradocs, but in none of the three cases do the circumstances admit of any identification with the king in the Latin romance. It is true that Caradoc, son of Rhydderch, has a brother named Griffith,[3] but no further parallelism can be observed between the incidents of the romance and those of the chronicle. Indeed, so far as I can discover, Welsh history offers no incident similar to that of the treachery of Griffith and the assassination of Caradoc in the Latin romance and the same may be said of Welsh legend as represented in the various texts—tales, triads, etc.—which are collected in Loth's *Les Mabinogion* (Paris, 1889). On the other hand, neither in the *Livre de Karados* of the continuation to Chrêtien's *Perceval*[4] nor elsewhere in the romance literature of the Middle Ages do I find any account of the death of *Carados Brie-Bras*, the famous

[1] W. F. Skene's *Four Ancient Books of Wales* (Edinburgh, 1868), I, p. 386.

[2] Cp. the editions of these works by the Rev. John Williams ab Ithel in the Rolls Series, both published at London in 1860.

The entries in the *Annales Cambriae* are as follows: (1) Under the year 798 "Caratauc rex Guenedote apud Saxones jugulatur." (2) Under 1035 "Caradauc filius Rederch ab Anglis occisus est." (3) Under 1079 "Bellum montis Carn, in qua Caradarn filius Caradoci et Caraduc filius Gorvini et Goethi filius Ruallan a Reso filio Teudur et a Grifino filio Conani occisus est." The corresponding passages in the *Brut y Tywysogion*, with slight variations of date for the last two instances, will be found in English translation on pp. 9, 39 and 51 respectively of Williams' edition.

[3] See *Annales Cambriae* under the year 1055 for the death of Grifud, son of Riderch.

[4] *Perceval le Gallois ou le Conte du Graal publié d'après les manuscrits originaux par Ch. Potvin* (Mons, 1866–71), vol. III, pp. 117 ff.

Sir Craddocke of the English ballad. His chaste wife, moreover, *Guinon*, *Guinor*, *Guimer*[1] is not represented anywhere as the daughter of a king of Ireland.

It is quite in accord with what has already been said that we find the Latin romance also differing from Welsh and Arthurian legend generally as to the consort of King Urien. In the Welsh tradition this person is Modron,[2] not Orwen. In the French romances, in the not very frequent passages where mention is made of Urien's wife, she is Morgan le fay.[3]

It is plain then from the above that the well-known names of Arthurian saga have been utilized to give *éclat* to a story which originally had no connection with it. Nevertheless, the remaining names are for the most part[4] Welsh and the background of mountain and forest, haunted by wolves, seems

[1] For these variant forms of the name see Potvin's edition of the *Perceval*, l. 15415, l. 15351, and vol. III, p. 207, *note* respectively.

[2] See J. Loth's *Les Mabinogion*, II, p. 260.

[3] Cp. the Huth-*Merlin* (ed. G. Paris and J. Ulrich for the *Société des Anciens Textes Français*, Paris, 1886), I, pp. 201 f., where their marriage is related,—also *Roman de Merlin* (ed. O. Sommer, London, 1894), p. 177, and Malory's *Morte Darthur* (ed. O. Sommer, London, 1889–91), I, pp. 89, 123, 126, 140.

[4] To consider these different names:

1. *Orwen* occurs twice in *Kulhwch and Olwen* (s. *The Mabinogion*, etc., edited by Rhys and Evans, Oxford, 1887, pp. 123, 142). It is the name of the queen of Ethelbert in the Latin version of the Havelock-story which Prof. Skeat quotes from the fourteenth century *Eulogium Historiarum* in his edition of *Havelok* for the Early English Text Society, London, 1868, Preface, p. xvii. So also *Orewayn* in the Lambeth fragment of *Havelok* (Skeat's Preface, p. xii) and *Orwain*, *Orewain*, *Orewen* in the Old French versions of the Havelock-story. (For passages see Index to Geffrei Gaimar's *L'Estorie des Engles*, edited by Hardy and Martin for the Rolls Series, London, 1888–89.) This name was already recognized as Welsh by Ward in his discussion of the Havelock-legend (*Catalogue of Romances*, I, p. 432). Lady Charlotte Guest, in her translation of the *Mabinogion* (2nd edition, London, 1877), p. 257, reproduces the name *Orwen* as it appears in the Welsh text, whereas in J. Loth's translation of the same passage (*Les Mabinogion*, I, p. 282) we find *Gorwenn*. Dr. F. N. Robinson of Harvard kindly informs me that the latter is correct, the forms of the Welsh text without *g* being explained by the regular loss of initial *g* in certain situations in Welsh.

to be an inseparable part of the original conception of the story. Indeed, there is a certain curious resemblance—partly of incident but mainly of atmosphere—between the story of the youth of Meriadoc and Orwen and that of the young princes in *Cymbeline* which Shakespeare lays in the moun-

2. *Morwen* was doubtless in use in Wales, although I do not know of any occurrence of the name in a specifically Welsh document. I find it, however, as the name of the saint of Morwenstow in the northeast angle of Cornwall. S. Morwenna, *Dictionary of Christian Biography* (London, 1882), II, p. 948.

3. *Duneuuallus* is no doubt another Latinization of Welsh *Dumnagual* or *Dyvnwal* (see Loth, *Les Mabinogion*, II, pp. 365, 366) which appears in Geoffrey of Monmouth (Book II, Chap. 17) as *Dunvallo*.

4. *Sadocus* does not occur, as far as I am aware, as a Welsh name. The name *Sadoc*, without the termination *-us*, does occur in the genealogy of Christ in the Gospel of St. Matthew, I, 14: "Azor autem genuit Sadoc. Sadoc autem genuit Achim." Nevertheless, I think we are more likely to have here the corruption of a genuine Welsh name, such as *Cadawc* (*Cadoc*) (s. Loth, *Les Mabinogion*, II, p. 262, note,—also in Latinized form *Cadocus*, *Zs. f. franz. Sprache und Literatur*, XIV, p. 179, and under *Cadoc* in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*).

5. *Moroveus* is a variant form of *Meroveus* and is taken like other names in this romance, as we shall see later on, from Frankish history. It is not recorded among the long list of variants of *Meroveus* in the Index to the *Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum* (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*), Hannover, 1888; s. Tomus, II, p. 545. Nevertheless, in the genealogy of the French kings, which occurs in John Capgrave's *Liber de Illustribus Henricis* (edited by the Rev. F. C. Hingeston for the Rolls Series, London, 1858), pp. 148 f., we have "Moroveus . . . . a quo reges Franciae etiam ad tempus Morovingi vocabantur. Moroveus genuit Childericum."

6. *Griffinus* and *Ivorius* being simply Latinizations of the well-known Welsh names, Griffith and Ivor, do not call for comment.

7. *Dolfin*, as the name of a dog, is unknown to me save in this text.

Passing to names of places: 1. I have been unable to identify the *Silva Fleuentana* (p. 349). 2. The *Scilleas fauces* (p. 356) is simply a reminiscence, no doubt, of the classical Scylla and Charybdis. 3. *Arglud* (p. 347), the name of the wood in which the children are reared, means "on (or opposite) the Clyde." The variant form of this name, *Alclud*, is used throughout Geoffrey of Monmouth (cp. Book II, Ch. 7, *et passim*) as the name of a town in the North. Only later, then, is it applied to the wood (s. E. Phillimore in *Y Cymmrodor*, XI, p. 75, note). The author of the romance evidently places this forest near the court of the King of Wales, which involves a singular geographical confusion.

tains of Wales.[1] As a mark of Welsh, or, at least, Celtic origin, perhaps, we may take the mysterious eagles on Eagle Rock (p. 349) which constantly face the four points of the compass. Compare with these the equally mysterious eagles of the *De Mirabilibus Britanniae* (s. *Nennius*, ed. Mommsen in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Berlin, 1894, p. 213): "Primum miraculum est stagnum Lumenoy. In eo sunt insulae sexaginta et ibi habitant homines et sexaginta rupibus ambitur et nidus aquilae in unaquaque rupe est," or the fabulous eagle of Snowdon in the *Itinerarium Kambriae* of Giraldus Cambrensis (*Works*, edited by J. F. Dimock for the Rolls Series, London, 1868, vol. VI, p. 136), "quae qualibet quinta feria lapidi cuidam insidens fatali, ut interemptorum cadavere famem satiet, bellum eodem die futurum fertur exspectare; lapidemque praedictum, cui consuevit insidere, jam prope, rostrum purgando pariter et exacuendo, perforasse."

As already stated, I have been unable to connect the story of this first division of the *Vita Meriadoci* with any story of Celtic origin, nor has my search been more successful in the literatures of other nations. Nevertheless, the most essential individual features of the story can be paralleled from various other stories. The treachery of the regent towards the children with the rule over whose dominions he is temporarily entrusted recalls the story of *Havelok* (ed. Skeat, E. E. T. S., 1868) and the resemblance as to *motif* is observable even in detail. Thus Godard in *Havelok* (ll. 443 ff.) plans to slay his wards, but is so far affected with pity by the pleadings of the boy, at least, that he allows him to escape for the time being, but commits him to Grim with the order that he be slain. Like the executioners in the Latin romance, although he escapes their subsequent fate, Grim contrives means of saving the life of the boy. It is an unessential difference that the regent in *Havelok* is not

[1] This episode, as far as is known, was invented by Shakespeare. Cp. A. W. Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature* (new edition, London, 1899), II, p. 190.

the uncle of the heir. Neither is the guardian of Goldborough in the parallel story of the heroine in the same English romance, yet in the Old French *Lai D'Haveloc* (s. Geffrei Gaimar's *L'Estorie des Engles*, edited by Hardy and Martin for the Rolls Series, London, 1888–89, pp. 295 ff.) Alsi is uncle to Argentille. In addition, however, it is to be noted in *Havelok* that the father of the children is not slain by the treacherous regent. A still further similarity is observable in the detail that Grim, when he applies for his reward after having pretended to slay Havelok, meets with the same reception from his employer (ll. 678 ff.) as the assassins of Caradoc and only escapes death by flight.

The same *motif* of the faithless uncle and the compassionate executioners, adapted to the circumstances of *bourgeois* life, will be found in the well-known ballad of the *Children in the Wood*[1] (Percy's *Reliques*, ed. A. Schröer, Berlin, 1893, II, pp. 672 ff.).

It may also be noted that in the legend of the *Chevalier au Cygne*[2] a servant who at the direction of their grandmother takes the hero and his sister and brothers into the forest to slay them has pity on them and leaves them where they are found by a hermit who brings them up. For the rest, supernatural features are too closely interwoven with the story of the *Chevalier au Cygne* to admit of any further comparison.

For the prophetic dream in which the death of Caradoc is foreshadowed compare the examples cited by R. Mentz in

[1] Percy regards this ballad as based on an old play, *Two Lamentable Tragedies*, etc., by Rob. Yarrington, 1601, and the play in its turn as based probably on some Italian novel. Fleay seems to show (*Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama*, II, pp. 285 f.) that Yarrington is a fictitious name and that Chettle is the real author of the play. He throws no light, however, on the source.

[2] For analyses of the various versions see H. A. Todd, *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* for 1889, *La Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*, Introduction, pp. ii ff.—also G. Paris in *Romania*, XIX, 314 ff.

his *Träume in den Altfranzösischen Karls = und Artusepen* (Marburg, 1888), pp. 26 f.

In conclusion, as to this division there seems to be a certain confusion of *motifs* in the first part of the *Vita Meriadoci* with regard to the manner in which the children are saved from execution. The compassion of the men appointed to slay them would have alone sufficed and it seems unjust that this compassion should have been rewarded with death, as we find it in the romance. We shall, perhaps, have to take our choice between two different modes of rescue. Under the alternative hypothesis we should have to suppose that the men were only prevented from carrying out their lord's commands by the elaborate stratagem of Ivor through which they themselves suffer death. If we suppose them to be saved simply through a change of heart on the part of the appointed executioners, the story would be left too bald and the second hypothesis seems to me to be the more acceptable.

II. The second division of the *Vita Meriadoci* (pp. 357–365) relating the successive encounters of Meriadoc with the three knights, who after being overthrown by him become his most devoted followers, delays the career of continental adventure on which the hero seems just about to enter and is, I believe, the invention of the writer who gave the stories concerning Meriadoc their Latin dress. Nothing, perhaps, so insipid or absurd can be found even in Arthurian fiction as these knights with their preposterous names. Indeed, I have little doubt that we have in this episode an anticipation of *Sir Thopas*—if anything so coarse of texture can be compared with Chaucer's masterpiece—that is to say, an intentional burlesque on the romances of the time. This tendency to burlesque has shown itself unmistakably in the *De Ortu Waluuanii* in the receipt for the preparation of Greek fire[1] and the present episode offers in my opinion simply another manifestation of the same spirit. For the rest, the indi-

[1] *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, XIII, pp. 412 ff.

vidual *motifs* are practically all commonplaces[1] of the Arthurian romances.

III. The strange adventures of Meriadoc (pp. 365–380) in the forest which constitute the third division of the Latin romance have no exact parallel, as far as I can discover, in medieval fiction. Leaving aside the innumerable examples in fairy tales of enchanted palaces situated in the depths of forests, the experiences of the hero in the present story bear greater resemblance to those of Huon of Bordeaux in the Castle of Adamant (s. the English version, *Huon of Burdeux*, edited by S. L. Lee for the Early English Text Society, 1884–87, II, pp. 408–413) than to any others I could mention. We have there, at least, the attendants who preserve an unbroken silence in spite of all the questions of the hero and their chief shows also his resentment at these questions, although in a different manner from the steward of the *Vita Meriadoci*.

There is a similar incident in *La Mule sanz Frain* (*Nouveau Recueil de Fabliaux et Contes Inédits*, edited by Méon, Paris, 1823), ll. 486 f., of a dwarf who exhibits the same reticence when encountered by Gawain in the marvellous palace, and still other examples of various features of these adventures might be adduced, but the resemblances are of too general a nature to be of any value. All that can be said is that the impression left upon the reader by this section of the romance is most similar, perhaps, to that which is produced by the prose forms of *Huon de Bordeaux* and *Ogier le Danois*.

[1] The most characteristic features of the episode, viz., that the vanquished knight becomes a follower of his successful adversary and receives back from Arthur all that he has lost by his defeat, are found in the second part of *Golagros and Gawane* (last edited by F. J. Amours for the Scottish Text Society in *Scottish Alliterative Poems*, Edinburgh and London, 1897), stanzas 92–105. The Scotch poet drew his materials from the *Conte du Graal*, ll. 18209 ff. (ed. Potvin). Similar also is the Galeron episode of the *Awntyrs off Arthure* in the same volume as *Golagros and Gawane*.

IV. In the remaining section of the romance (pp. 380–397) it is noteworthy that the two brothers, Gundebald and Guntramn, bear names which are characteristic of the Franks and Burgundians, and are evidently derived from their history. We have already had *Moroveus* from this source. The first of the above names, *Gundebaldus*, is evidently a variant of the name of the Burgundian king, Gundobad († 516). So we find *Gundobaldus* among the variant forms of the name of this king in the Index to the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Gregorii Turonensis Opera* (Hannover, 1884–85), Part II. So *Guntramnus* is the name of the Frankish king, son of Chlotarius I., whose royal seat was at Orleans and the variant form, *Guntrannus*, will be found in a text of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptorum Tomus XV*, p. 474. On the other hand, the name of Meriadoc's companion, *Waldomerus*, belongs to the Scandinavian branch of the Germanic race.[1]

The manner in which Gundebald tests the applicants for military service under him recalls to mind a somewhat similar custom of King Arthur in the companion romance, *De Ortu Waluuanii* (pp. 424 ff.). Furthermore, the island in which his palace and beautiful gardens stand has striking points of resemblance to that in the *Sone de Nausay*[2] (edited by Moritz Goldschmidt for the Litterarischer Verein in Stuttgart, 1899, No. 216), ll. 17131 ff., and despite considerable differences of detail is in my opinion simply an altered and debased form of the same tradition. The isle in the French poem is situated *demie lieuwe en mer* (l. 17131), whereas the island of the Latin romance is absurdly situated *super Rheni fluminis ripas*. On the other hand, they are both exactly as long as they are broad :

[1] I have not been able to identify the place-name *Ueredario* (abl.), p. 378, nor *Saguncius* (p. 368), which is the name of a person.

[2] My attention was first called to this passage by the Preface to Förster's edition of Chrétien's *Lancelot* (*Der Karrenritter*), Halle, 1899, pp. xlix ff. It is there quoted in full.

Et l'ille si quaree estoit
Que nus hons savoir ne pooit
Au quel les il en a le plus. (ll. 17135 ff.)

Eiusdem latitudinis cuius et longitudinis est (p. 386). They are both approachable only by causeways, although in the *Sone de Nausay* the causeway does not reach quite to the island, being separated from it by Chrétien's *pons de l'espee.* The four palaces of the French poem on the periphery of the island against whose walls the sea beats are most likely the originals, as it seems to me, of the four *castella* (p. 386) of the *Vita Meriadoci* which guard the heads of the causeways. Finally in each a king of evil disposition rules over a spot of ideal beauty. The bottomless marsh which, in the Latin romance, lies on each side of the causeway is simply a more or less burlesque attempt in the spirit of this author to rationalize the traditional description of the marvellous island as the land from which no one returned. No phrase like the *terra de qua nemo revertitur* (p. 386) of the *Vita Meriadoci* characterizes the island in the French poem, yet I think it equally probable that this conception belongs to the original tradition as that it was borrowed from Chrétien's description of the realm—

Don nus estranges ne retorne. (*Lancelot*, l. 645.)

It is hardly necessary to point out that if the above theory of the relations between the *Sone de Nausay* and the *Vita Meriadoci* is correct, the description of the isle in the former is not simply a development of suggestions from Chrétien's romance.

The situation of the captive princess in this division of the romance is very similar to that of the heroine in the *De Ortu Waluuanii.* Nevertheless, the episodes differ too much, I think, to be taken as variants of the same original story.

Finally, the description of the hostilities between the Emperor of Germany and the King of France in the *Vita Meriadoci* recalls the opposition of these two personages in

Partonopeus de Blois (published by G. A. Crapelet, Paris, 1834), II, pp. 124 f., but the circumstances of their opposition are totally different in the two cases.

III.

AUTHOR.

The present romance is evidently by the same author as the *De Ortu Waluuanii*, which is preserved in the same MS. with it. The same tendency to burlesque manifests itself in the two romances. Leaving out of the question the episode of the three knights, the description of the mode of preparing food in the forest in the *Vita Meriadoci* (p. 350) exhibits this tendency almost as plainly as the receipt for the preparation of Greek fire in the *De Ortu Waluuanii* (pp. 412 ff.). Attention has already been called to the similarity between the situations of the captive princesses in the two romances as also to the similarity between Arthur's and Gundebald's methods of testing the knights who seek service under them. Similarities of Latin construction confirm the view of identical authorship. The most marked of these, perhaps, are the great abuse of *que* as a connective and the constant insertion of words of the main clause in ablative absolute clauses. These peculiarities are found on nearly every page of both romances.

For the rest, the *Vita Meriadoci* supplies us with no new evidence as to the personality or nationality of the author.[1] The similarity of the materials he drew from to the French romances which has been pointed out above leaves little doubt that these materials were also French. Mr. Ward (*Catalogue*, I, p. 375) has already remarked that the use of *Snowdon* for *Eryri* makes it plain that the author was not a Welshman. On the other hand, there is nothing which enables us to decide whether he was of French or English nationality. I

[1] See on this subject my edition of the *De Ortu Waluuanii* (pp. 386 f.).

note that the only citation in Ducange for the word *carpella* (= saddle-bow) which occurs in our text (p. 373) is from an Anglo-Saxon gloss, but I am unable to say whether any significance should be attached to this. Considering that the romance is preserved only in an English MS. there is a presumption that the author was English.

IV.

Date.

Since the *Vita Meriadoci* is unquestionably from the same hand as the *De Ortu Waluuanii*, it is unnecessary to add anything to the discussion of the date of the author which will be found in my edition of the latter romance (pp. 388 f.). There is no new evidence in the *Vita Meriadoci* on this subject and accordingly no reason to change the conclusion there arrived at that the author of the Latin romances wrote in the second quarter of the thirteenth century and that the materials which he used were probably of but little earlier date.[1]

V.

Text.

Vita Meriadoci.

[Cott. MS. Faustina, B. VI.]

[Fol. 2.] Incipit prologus R.[2] In Historia Meriadoci, regis Kambrie, memoratu dignam dignum duxi exarare historiam, cuius textus tantarum probitatum tantique leporis decoratur titulis, ut, si singula seriatim percurrerem, faui dulcorem in

[1] Just as in the case of the *De Ortu Waluuanii* the MS. of the present romance exhibits numerous omissions (s. pp. 356, 379, *et passim*), to say nothing of errors, which make it certain that it is not the original MS. of the author.

[2] *I confess that I do not understand the meaning of this* R. *Probably it was the initial of the author or scribe.*

fastidium uerterem. Legencium igitur consulens utilitati illam compendioso perstringere stilo statui, sciens quod maioris sit precii breuis cum sensu oracio quam multiflua racione uacans locucio.

Incipit historia Meriadoci, regis Kambrie. Igitur ante tempora regis Arturi, qui totius Britannie monarchiam optinuit, insula tres in partes digesta, Kambriam uidelicet Albaniam et Loegriam, plurimorum regum subiacebat imperiis, eiusque quam plures, prout fortuna rem ministrabat, uno in tempore gubernacula sorciebantur. Ea autem tempestate, regnante scilicet Uther Pendragon, patre Arturi, regnum Kambrie duobus germanis, genitore defuncto, cesserat, quorum natu maior, Caradocus dictus, ius regium possidebat, iunior autem, Griffinus uocabulo, partem prouincie sibi a fratre gubernabat creditam. Sedes uero regni Caradoci regis [Col. 2.] et quo maxime frequentare solebat penes niualem montem, qui Kambrice Snavdone resonat, exstabat. Hic autem rex Caradocus, diuiciis pollens miraque uirtute preditus, classem permaximam milite instructam in Hyberniam duxit, quam, rege ipsius deuicto, sue dicioni subiugans sibi tributariam effecit. Rebusque prospere gestis, filiam regis Hybernensis suo matrimonio copulauit, ex qua in Kambriam reuersus duos gemellos sed diuersi sexus progenuit. Qui, dum regnum non modico tempore rexisset tranquille, contigit eum in senium uergi etateque prematura grauari. Et quia in effeto corpore et uigor minuitur et sensualis intellectus hebetatur, tanto regimini operam ulterius *adhibere*[1] non preualens, tocius regni tutelam suo fratri Griffino tuendam tradidit. Ipse autem uenatibus aliisque oblectamentis licencius indulgens quiete et ocio senium pertrahebat et fouebat.

At Griffinus curam regni sibi commissam diligenter exequens sapienterque administrans nil absque regis Caradoci fratris sui consilio disponebat. Vnde et a fratre maiorem graciam meruit, eique omnem regni potestatem, regio dumtaxat sibi retento nomine, rex Caradocus commiserit. Sed

[1] MS. adibire.

ubique nequicie pestis sur[Fol. 2b.]repit, que eo cicius mentem ad scelus impellit, quo eam maior rerum cupido infecerit. Quidam namque peruerse mentis, uel fraterne paci inuidentes aut nouitatibus studentes seu certe aliorum discrimen sibi lucrum fore reputantes, Griffinum conueniunt eumque in fraternam necem hiis uerbis accendunt:

"Quia tuis" inquiunt "hactenus utilitatibus accuracius studium dedimus teque honoris sullimare fastigio sedulum habuimus, indignum nos ualde ducere noueris, hunc decrepitum tibi preponi, quem omnium sensuum iam pene constat officio priuari; maximo quippe dedecori tibi debet uideri, illi te dignitate posteriorem haberi, qui et eiusdem nobilitatis insigniris linea et cui maior cum uirtute corporis noscitur inesse sapiencia. Jam eciam fama uulgante, comperimus illum ad sue nate coniugium quendam gentis extranee potentem acciuisse regnique gubernacula tibi commissa ei uelle committere. Quem si contigerit sibi oblata inesse connubia, ratum existimes quod et te debito honore destituet et nobis auita predia prossus surripiet; fraude quippe et sub dolositate fieri ne dubites, te regiis prelatum negociis, donec prefatum nobilem filie interuenientibus [Col. 2.] nupciis sibi confederauerit; cuius amminiculo si quid aduersus eum moliri uolueris, tuos casset conatus. Cur igitur illum infatuatum senem diucius sinis uiuere, cuius causa et nos et tocius regni statum patet *periclitari?*[1] Verum tua tibi mens fortassis applaudit, omne ius regium ac omne semper sicut nunc tibi regni cessurum negocium. Sed numquid impune? Nonne Caradoco educatur filius quem eciam nunc etas tenella mire probitatis futurum certis manifestat indiciis? Nonne, cum uiriles annos attigerit, sibi paternum uendicabit principatum? Cuius apicem si te consentaneo assequi non potuerit, numquid tibi inuito ui extorquere non laborabit? Hinc ciuilis discordia, intestinum bellum, cedes ciuium, patrieque proueniet desolacio. Jube igitur ad Tartara dirigi cuius uitam uobis tanto perpendimus imminere discrimini. Ecce uniuersa manus

[1] MS. periclitare.

procerum tibi subditur, omnis regni potestas tue uoluntati exponitur, si id dumtaxat perfeceris, quod tibi a nobis consulitur. Et ne causeris te tantum negocium absque magna industria manuque ualida nec posse nec audere aggredi. Tantum assensum tribue, et nos eo rem moliemur ingenio, quo nulla tibi de eius nece possit oriri suspicio."

Quid multa? Hiis atque aliis multis fraudulentis ser[Fol. 3.] monibus animum Griffini circumueniunt et, nunc quasi imminente terrentes discrimine, nunc blanda regni mulcentes ambicione, ad fraterne necis assensum pertrahunt. Inde loci temporisque opportunitas queritur, qua propositum perpetraretur facinus. Placet eum siluas uenatum adeuntem a sociis seducere et in abdita nemoris iaculo confodire. Diesque crastina ad hec explenda statuitur, qua regem Caradocum uenandi gracia siluas se aditurum proposuisse non ignorabant.

Nocte uero preterita ipsius diei, cum rex Caradocus se quieti dedisset, uisum est sibi suum fratrem Griffinum sibi [in] siluis ex aduerso consistere et duas sagittas pharetra exemptas cote diligenter acuere, duosque deinde uiros aduenisse ipsasque sagittas de manu Griffini accipientes tenso neruo inopinate in se direxisse. Ad quarum ictum ipse perter[r]itus sompno excutitur, et, quasi reuera uulnus pertulisset, magnis uocibus uociferatur. Cuius insolito clamore regina obstupefacta eum inter brachia corripit et quid haberet curue tantas uoces emitteret tremebunda inquirit. Quo, adhuc pre timore palma pectori impressa, que uiderat referente, illa presaga futuri: "Te, domine" ait "queso, obserua, quia tuus procul dubio germanus Griffinus [Col. 2.] tibi machinatur insidias; insidias quippe portendunt sagitte. Et quia te luce sequenti uenatum ire constituisti, insidiarum locum tibi [in] siluis agnoscas parari. Laudo igitur te hac uice domi manere uenatusque oblectamenta in posterum differre." E contra rex "Desine" inquit "loqui huiusmodi; meum fratrem quem adeo semper hactenus dilexi et cui tanta imperitus sum beneficia mihi nunquam credam mortis uelle moliri discrimina." Consilio itaque regine cedere renuit, sed summo diluculo, ut

fata eum ducebant, siluas uenatum peciit. Griffinus autem, suus germanus, duos uiros nobiles, quidem robustos et audaces sed moribus peruersos, truculentos et sanguinis effusione gaudentes, elegerat, destinatumque flagicium eis perficiendum commiserat, se eos omnibus Kambrie commorantibus sullimiores facturum pollicitus. Regalis igitur familia dum discopulatis canibus inuentam predam insequitur et, ut in tali solet fieri negocio, diuersis uiis certatim tenditur, rex Caradocus senio grauante insequi non preualens solus cui mors imminebat deseritur. Nec mora, aduolantes duo predicti scelesti uiri non eminus inter densa *fruticum*[1] abditi eum a uia remocius in opaco recessu nemorum distrahunt, distractum iaculo confodiunt, ac, telo uulneri relicto, festinanter discedunt, ut pocius casu alicuius uenantis [Fol. 3b.] quam fraude insidiantis id euenisse crederetur.

Mors autem tanti uiri diucius celari non potuit. Statim namque, adhuc tepente sanguine, a uenatoribus siluas oberrantibus exanimis *reperitur*.[2] Fit clamor, turbo, tumultus, signoque dato, reuocantur caterue uenancium. Profertur in medium funus regium cruore crudeliter conspersum, cuius miserabile spectaculum uniuersos ad fletum commouet et planctum. Tam magni facinoris queruntur auctores, sed difficile patet cognicio cuius rei de nullo habetur su[s]picio. Diffunditur rumor per uicinas urbes, regem Caradocum [in] silua insidiis circumuentum crudeliterque peremptum. Omnes gemunt, omnes super eo continuant luctum et gemitum, lacrimeque pro mortuo effuse quanto uiuus habebatur testabantur amore.

Regina uero, dum hec geruntur, super uisione sibi a uiro relata nimis uera coniciens thalamo residebat seque inpacabili fletu afficiebat. Que, nece regis comperta eiusque funere eminus contemplato, inmodico dolore correpta in extasim corruit, et, quia mens respiracionem a dolore habere non potuit, corruens expirauit.

[1] MS. fructicum.

[2] MS. repperitur.

Interea uero Griffinus alias longius profectus regia exequebatur negocia, ut omnis a se fratricidij aboleretur suspicio. Cui cum regis interfeccio nunciata [Col. 2.] fuisset, scissa ueste, abruptisque capillis, luctum simulauit, lacrimas ubertim effudit, *sed*[1] ipsas lacrimas pocius gaudium quam dolor extorquebat.

Rege igitur Caradoco fatis dato ingentique omnium comprouincialium merore eius celebratis exequiis, Griffinus confestim ui et potencia regnum sibi arripuit, ipsiusque sibi iura uendicans, se, proceribus absentibus et nescientibus, diademate insigniuit. Verum multociens nequiciam, quo magis quis tegere nititur, tocius propalatur. Duo namque illi grassatores qui innocuum regis sanguinem effuderant, ei semper assistentes, dum premium facinoris sibi promissum eum dissimulare et quasi obliuioni tradidisse conspicerent, eum secrete conuenere et ut debita persolueret expeciere, se vnde ab eo ea promeruisse commemorantes, quorum obsequio sibi regale cessisset solium. Ipse autem uersipellis, locum se *reperisse*[2] aduertens quo plebis a se opinionem auerteret—de fratris namque interitu iam habebatur suspectus—totum facinus, quasi ultor fratris et rei in[s]cius, in eos retorsit et de morte sui germani coram regni magnatibus criminari cepit; statimque quosdam ex officialibus aduocans "Hos" exclamat "carnifices, hos mei fratris karissimi interfectores tollite et eminencioris arboris fastigio tocius Kambrie simul suspendite, pateatque uniuersis quibus eorum nequiciam remuneraui stipendiis!" Ad hec illi callide in eum [Fol. 4.] cauillantes "Nequiter" respondent "exsoluis que nobis spopondisti." Quo sermone Griffinus perculsus metuensque ne se sceleris propalarent conscium eorum absque mora linguas radicitus iubet abscidi, ac, data sentencia, eos deinde puniri. Linguis igitur precisis, ad supplicium pertrahuntur, ac in prospectu utriusque insule, Hybernie scilicet et Kambrie, rupe preruptissima una suspenduntur. Sermo tamen quem in Griffinum

[1] MS. set. [2] MS. repperisse.

puniendi protulerant non surda aure perceptus ad principum patrie peruenit noticiam, unde apud omnes fratricidii Griffinus suspicionis notam incurrit.

Hoc itaque rumore uulgato, fit clandestina principum perpetratum facinus abhorrencium conuencio diligensque super rebus agendis inter eos consultacio. Nulli quippe dubium erat, sed, tum ex illorum qui crimen perpetrarant improbacione, tum ex uisionis quam supra *retulimus*[1] interpretacione, omnes ratum habebant, regem Caradocum consensu et consilio Griffini, fratris sui, necatum fuisse, callebantque uiri sagacis ingenii, quod, si regni stabilimentum manusque ualidior Griffino prouenisset, eamdem nequiciam quam in fratre exercuerat in se quoque qui ipsius fideles exstabant uel maiorem exerciturum; ob quod sibi caucius prouidendum [putant] et aliquid ex aduerso oportere conari, quo sua roborata pars aduersarii debilitaretur. Inito ergo consilio, cunctorum in hoc copulatur assensus, ut paruulos, filium scilicet et filiam [Col. 2.] regis Caradoci, Griffino auferrent *puellaque*[2] filio Morouei, ducis Cornubie, in coniugium traderetur; quatinus ipsius ducis subsidio puerum, licet decennem, in paternum regnum promouere et Griffino, si quid contra moliretur, possent obsistere.

Inter ceteros autem primores duo, Sadocus et Duneuuallus, sibi inuicem consanguinei, nobilissimi habebantur proceres, ex quorum sentencia omnium pendebat consilium et qui ipsi conuentui presidere uidebantur. Hii ex uniuersorum deliberacione Griffinum adeunt regiosque pueros ab eo reposcunt, a patrie principibus id esse decretum ipsisque placere asserentes, ut paruuli in sua tuicione consisterent, eos ipsi tutarent et educarent, donec etas maturior et hanc nubilem reddisset et puerum ad regni regimina que sibi iure debebantur admitteret; sic pacem firmandam, patrie concordiam futuram, principum nullumque ius regni sibi uendicare ausurum, dum hii in medio consisterent, ad quos regni respiciebat gubernacio

[1] MS. reculimus.
[2] MS. puellamque.

Tunc Griffinus, licet mente saucius, iram tamen continuit, et, ut erat uersute mentis, responsum proceribus distulit, ut, illis in responsi accepcione suspensis, quid aduersus eorum conatus sibi utile foret licencius interim preuideret. Moxque absque dilacione fidelem nuncium ad nutricium puerorum precipitanter dirigit, eos sibi omni proposita occasione [Fol. 4b.] imperans adduci, uolens sua sub potestate coherceri, causa quorum sibi periculum timebat imminere. Educabantur autem infantes apud regium uenatorem, Iuorium nomine, cuius uxor, Morwen dicta, ipsos gemellos gemino lactauerat ubere. Ipsos autem pueros tante pulcritudinis gracia uenustabat, ut ultra mortale quiddam in eis relucere crederes. Puer autem Meriadocus, puella Orwen dicebatur.

Iuorius igitur, mandato Griffini accepto, per nuncium ad se directum paruulos ei destinat, nil mali suspicatus et quid parabatur penitus inscius. Quibus adductis G[riffinus] consilium init cum suis complicibus, disserens et tractans cum eis quid principum sit obiciendum conatibus. Diuersisque diucius inde causis uentilatis, ultima demum in nece puerorum finitur sentencia. Perpendebat enim, quod, si ipsi principibus traderentur, suffrati ipsorum auxilio in se insurgerent et, ut regni heredes, se de regno expellere laborarent; si uero apud se conseruarentur, nichilominus, dum daretur facultas, paternum in se ulcisci niterentur interitum; atque ita, quia eorum causa se quoquouersus manebat exitium, hinc necessitate cogente, illinc regnandi cupiditate stimulante, eos neci addicendos adiudicat statimque trucidari imperat. Quod ubi infantes eius assis[Col. 2.]tentes presencie audierunt, lugubri uoce in altum emissa, in fletum miserabiliter proruperunt, seque inuicem amplexi ad sui aui corruere uestigia paruisque manibus eius pedes tenentes et illis blandis oribus osculantes lacrimabili questu ac miserandis precibus ut sibi misereretur precabantur. Quis ad hec teneret lacrimas? quis non ad misericordiam flecteretur super tante generositatis alumpnis, super tanto decore preditis, humo stratis, indulgenciam supplicantibus? Griffinus quoque, uidens suos nepotes suis

prouolutos uestigiis, ad misericordiam flectitur, eosque ab intentata cede absoluit. Verumptamen proprie saluti consulens sciensque quod, si salui euasissent, semper quoquomodo debitas a se penas exigerent, iussit eos ad siluam que Arglud *nuncupatur*[1] deduci atque laqueo suspendi, ita tamen ut fragiliori fune, qui cicius rumpi posset, sibi colla necterentur, fidei sacramento ab xij uiris hoc nefas executuris accepto, ut numquam inde discederent, donec rupta corda cecidissent.

Acceptis igitur infantulis, tortores forestam Arglud pecierunt. At ubi ad siluas uentum est, ceperunt mutuo de eorum conqueri exicio, dicentes nefarium esse tam crudeli morte perire quos nihil constabat deliquisse. Motique pietate sic eos statuerunt suspendere, ut et funis cito [Fol. 5.] rumperetur et salui euadere potuissent. In quodam autem saltu ipsius nemoris annosa quercus a diluuii exstabat tempore, proceritate elata, ramis ampla diffusis, et quam uix bisseni uiri brachiorum circumdarent amplexu. Solo tenusque interius erat concaua; cuius concauitas in se spaciose uiginti *contineret*[2] homines, adeo artum habens aditum, ut flexo poplite, depressis humeris, illam necesse erat subire. Super huius ramum roboris pueros, coniunctis adinuicem uultibus, mutuis inherentes amplexibus, debili fasce illaquearunt, ut, sicut dixi, rupto fune, cicius caderent illesisque gutturibus inde[m]pni manere[n]t. Laqueo suspenduntur; suspensos autem pueros ipsi econtra, ut sibi imperatum fuerat, obseruantes residebant.

Interea tam tristis rumor ad eorum nutricii Iuorij aures defertur. Qui rem sue coniugi, lacrimis suffusus, referens, "Aut" ait, "certe, eos neci surripiam aut una cum eis moriar." Confestimque cornu uenatorio collo innexo seque suo cane, dicto Dolfin, commitante, quem multum diligebat, simul cum uxore Morwen ad siluam Arglud iter arripuit, hiis armis tantummodo, arcu scilicet cum sagittis et gladio, contentus. Sed quia se solum inermem contra tot intelligebat nil posse ualere, industria sanius quam uiribus censebat uten-

[1] MS. nunccupatur. [2] MS. conciueret.

dum. Quatuor igitur ingentes focos e quatuor partibus ipsius saltus accendit [Col. 2.], accensisque plurimas quas secum attulerat carnes passim iniecit *ilicemque*[1] uicinam cum coniuge et cane ascendens delituit. Fumo autem ignium per nemoris latitudinem diffuso, ubi lupi in confinio degentes—quorum inibi ingens habebatur copia—odorem perceperunt carnium, illo contendere et confluere ilico ceperunt, sociisque longius exstantibus diro ululatu, ut moris habent, aduocatis, in unius hore spacio pene usque ad duo milia conuenere. Aduentu quorum illi xij uiri nimis perterriti seque uidentes tanta luporum hinc et inde obsessos multitudine, dum nec ualerent fugere nec loco auderent consistere, concauitatem prefate arboris delitescendi gracia omnes subiere. Lupi autem conuenientes rogos cateruatim circumastabant atque in flammarum globos ac si inde carnes erepturi impetum faciebant. Tunc Iuorius, tenso arcu, quatuor in illos quatuor ignes uallantes spicula direxit, quatuorque, transfossis illiis, uulnerauit. Sanguine uero effluente, ceteri omnes lupi in eos qui uulnera pertulerant irruerunt eosque membratim dilacerantes discerpserunt; consuetudinis enim est illis illo quo ignem perceperint semper contendere, eumque quem e sui numero sauciari contigerit unguibus et dentibus discerpere. Lupis uero circa rogos certantibus et tumultuantibus, cauee inclusis metus augebatur [Fol. 5b.], lupos sin[e] causa circa quercum exterius seuire reputantibus. Ad hec Iuorius cornu ho[r]ribiliter insonuit eiusque strepitu uniuersos inde lupos abegit. Nichil enim adeo lupi quam sagittas et tubarum metuunt strepitum, vnde eciam raro aut numquam uenatoribus lesionem inferunt.

Iuorius igitur inde, lupis abactis, arborem qua consederat descendit ac ignem copiosum ante ipsius fouee introitum qua uiri latebant cumulauit; cuius calore fumique uapore inclusos pene extinxit. Illi autem se interius quantum ualebant retrahebant et artabant, sed Iuorius nichilominus semper

[1] MS. illicemque.

ignem propius admouens insequebatur, donec sub ipso ore spelunce flammam ingessit. Tunc illi torridi et semiusti una uoce "Iuori, miserere!" exclamant "scimus enim quis sis et quod causa paruulorum hoc in nos sis machinatus discrimen. Sed, quesumus, ignem a nobis amoue et facultatem hinc egrediendi tribue; et nos tecum pueris liberum paciemur abire." Quibus Iuorius: "Exite, ergo." Ignemque e latere hinc et inde amouens, exeundi facultatem dedit. Erat autem, ut in anterioribus retuli, ipsius cauee aditus tam artus et summissus, ut non ubi unum solum intrantem uel exeuntem et illum flexo poplite, capite demisso, admitteret et emitteret. Data itaque exeundi licencia, unus solus repens manibus et pedibus egreditur. Qui cum ceruicem extulisset, Iuorius a foris e latere [Col. 2.] spelunce consistens, euaginato gladio, ei *caput*[1] amputauit. Trunc[a]tumque ad se cadauer extrahens, "Exite hinc! propere hinc" exclamat "exite!" Quid moramimur? Vnus igitur post unum omnes egressi sunt, singulisque egredientibus Iuorius *caput*[1] abscidit.

Hiis ita gestis, pueros iam pene dimidie diei suspensos spacio, eciam fere exanimes, deposuit, allatoque cibo eorum animas parum refocillauit, ac deinde cum eis et suo cane Dolfin et coniuge ad siluam Fleuentanam confugit. Verebatur namque propter Griffini *furorem*[2] uel domum redire uel quoquam in patria clam amplius consistere. In illa autem silua rupis ardua nimis eminebat, rupis aquilarum *nuncupata*,[3] eo quod omni tempore quatuor super illam nidificient aquile, contra quatuor principales uentos semper uultus *conuersos*[4] habentes. Et ipsa uero et in ipsa rupe aula perampla, perpulcri thalami, diuersaque miri operis ad instar testudinis erant incisa edificia, habitacula ciclopum olim credita, sed ante illud tempus uix ab aliquo comperta, archano et densissimo nemoris sinu recondita. Hec edificia Iuorius cum infantulis peciit, ac ibi quinquennio omnibus incognitus moram fecit. Ferina caro quam uenatu conquirebat cibum, latex

[1] MS. capud. [2] MS. furororem. [3] MS. nunccupata. [4] MS. conuerse.

haustum prebebat; nuces quoque pomaque siluestria et ceteri fructus qui inibi inueniri poterant, autump[Fol. 6.]nali collecti tempore et reconditi, alimento seruiebant. Iuorius cum Meriadoco uenatum et aucupatum cotidie pergebat; Morwen uero, uxor eius, puella Orwen secum assumpta, in colligendo fructus uel herbas occupabatur.

Sed[1] hic fortassis queritur quomodo sibi carnes ad esum parauerint, dum et ignis et uasa quibus elixari possent defuerint. Carnes quidem sibi pabulatum more *filiorum*[2] exulancium accurare consueuerant. Huiusmodi quippe homines prediis uel patria scelere exigente expulsi, publica ab conuersacione remocius semoti, saltus siluarumque latebras usque frequentantes, dum uasis cibis elixandis necessariis indigent, ignem silice eliciunt, piram[3] quam maximam e sarmentorum lignorumque constructam congerie copiose accendunt; accenseque caucium quot uoluerint calefaciendos iniciunt. Interim uero ceteri, terram cauantes, binas fossas non eiusdem quantitatis preparant, una quarum alta et ampla, altera parum arcior et profundior exstat. Sicque constituuntur ad inuicem, ut semipedis inconuulse terre spacium inter eas maneat. Per illud autem spacium a maiori ad humiliorem foueam fit oblique haut magnum foramen quod clepsedra uel sude obturatur. Inde unda implent maiorem, carnes uero elixandas in minori collocant, uiridi quoquouersus substrato gramine, locatasque iterum herba cooperiunt. [Col. 2.] Hiis autem ita compositis, iam scintillantes foco eiectos caudices in foueam repletam deuoluunt lance; ab quorum feruore limpha non solum estuans sed eciam ebulliens dempta clusilla incontinenti pabula percurrere cauea sinitur. Hocque tam diu fit donec sufficienter elixa caro extrahatur. Iuorius quoque, eo ordine carnes elixandas conficiens, cibum sibi gratissimum et saporissimum accurabat. Attritis autem et consumptis uestimentis que illuc attulerant, indumenta sibi ex pappiris texuerunt ac arborum consuerunt foliis.

[1] MS. set. [2] MS. filius. [3] *Latinization of Greek* πῦρ.

Emenso uero v annorum spacio, quadam die, dum nemus se solito spaciatum lustrarent et Morwen cum puella longius ab Iuorio esset semota, ecce Vrianus cum Kaio, regis Arturi dapifero, media uia illis occurrit. Vrianus uero rex erat Scocie curiamque regis Arturi adierat, eumque ad propria repedantem Kaius iussu regis Arturi conducebat. Cumque simul properantes cominus puelle deuenissent, salutans sibi inuicem Kaius quidem regreditur; Vrianus uero ceptum iter prosequitur. Qui puellam eleganti forma contemplatus, tanteque esse pulcritudinis, quante nunquam aliquam nouerat, ipsius amore succenditur. Illo equum conuertit; illam nequicquam reluctantem ante se super sonipedem sustulit, ac, nutrice flente relicta, suam in patriam abduxit. Gaius quoque, dum per artam semitam [Fol. 6b.] regrediendo tenderet, Iuorium et Meriadocum uenatu honustos obuios habuit. Ipseque *incomparabilem*[1] pueri admiratus speciem—erat enim flauis capillis, nitida facie, procera statura et pectore exstante, ilibus gracilioribus—cornipedem post ipsos iam fugientes admittit, Iuorioque longius terrore abacto, Meriadocum rapuit ouansque secum deuexit.

Iuorius autem, erepto sibi puero Meriadoco, sua lugubris habitacula repetit, quo sua[m] coniugem similem deflentem querelam offendens quod discrimen incurrerant alterutro referunt. Pro quo infortunio eiusmodi dolor eorum mentes occupauit, ut continuo biennio post amissionem puerorum se inmitigabili luctu torquentes non sine maxima cibi potusque penuria inibi soli degerent.

Expleto uero biennio, dum una dierum se conquerentes inuicem multa conferrent, "Quid" ait illa "hic solitarii degimus? Causa pue[r]orum huc confugimus, ut eos uite conseruaremus, hic hactenus perstitimus; quibus ablatis et desideratis, quid hic nos ulterius detinet? Saniori profecto uteremur consilio, si quo abducti sint inquirere et indagare studuissemus. Pergam certe nunquam indultura labori, nunquam captura quietem, donec puellam michi surreptam

[1] MS. incomparibilem.

usquam fortuna *nancisci*[1] con[Col. 2.]cesserit. Scio autem quod hac parte et manum contra boream[2] abducta sit. Miles enim qui uirum conducebat, a quo puella rapta est, dum ab eo discederet, se in Scociam ad eum uenturum promisit eique proprio ualedicens nomine Vrianum nuncupauit." Iuorius: "Ego quidem curiam regis Arturi frequenter frequentaui, ei uenatorio officio obsequens, quo, si umquam Kaius ipsius dapifer michi uisus et cognitus est, illum a me puerum Meriadocum abstulisse non dubito. Ibo et ego, si forte diuinum numen, mei miseratum doloris, eum michi aliquorsum obtulerit." Dicta faciunt; se mutuo flentes osculantur; diuersasque uias ineuntes ab inuicem dirimuntur. Morwen igitur ad Scociam iter arripuit; ipsaque die qua Vrianus rex, puella Oruen sibi in uxore dotata, celebres nupcias agebat, illo peruenit. Jam namque Oruuen nubilem etatem attigerat; que quibus erat oriunda natalibus, ipsa referente, Vriano regi euidenter patuerat. Missarum autem peractis solempniis, dum regina Oruen splendidis ornata indumentis ab ecclesia ad palacium rediret, Moruuen, turbis pauperum qui elemosinam petituri confluerant inmixta, ipsam quidem diligenter contemplabatur, *sed*[3] eam minime cognoscere potuit; ex uarietate quippe cultus sepe fallitur cognicio ulterius. [Fol. 7.] At regina inter cateruas pauperum parum subsistens, cui bonus mos inoleuerat egenos semper fouere et eorum inopiam sua supplere habundancia, dum pietatis in eos intuitum flecteret, suam nutricem inopinate aduertit, animaduersamque cognouit. Quam statim ut aspexit, pallore suffunditur et cum dolore preteritorum, cum gaudio presencium, mente sibi euanescente, in mentis excessum rapitur ac inter manus procerum quibus incumbebat ad terram labitur. Ad hec nobiles et proceres omnes et circumstantes obstupefacti accurrunt. Adest et ipse rex Vrianus nimis trepidus, eamque in se reuersam reuelans quid habuisset interrogat. Regina "Non est mirum, domine" respondit "si uultus palluerit, si

[1] MS. nanccissci. [2] *MS. has* tetendit *after* boream. [3] MS. set.

mens mihi defecerit—mihi me coram illam intuenti assistere que cum maximo proprio dispendio me neci surripuit et usque ad etatem adultam educauit. *Sed*[1] nunquam cara tibi habear; quo me amore diligas, in ea ostendere poteris; quia quicquid boni uel honoris illi impenderis, me gracius accepturam quam mihimet impensum cognoscito." Suamque nutricem medio pauperum euocans, lacrimis prorumpentibus, eius collo brachia iniecit ac ante regem Vrianum papira dumtaxat ueste amictam statuit. Vrianus uero, liberalitatem laudans coniugis, iussit Moruuen thalamo induci, optimo cultu indui, omniaque ei reperiens necessaria, cum regina fecit morari.

[Col. 2.] Iuorius autem interea regis Arturi curiam adiit, atque eo conuiuante, cuius fores nunquam tempore prandij claudebantur, regiam aulam, omnibus spectaculo factus, subiit; uir namque *enormis*[2] proceritatis erat, torua facie, barba prolixa, incultis crinibus, scyrpis et papijris contextis amictus, ense latus cinctus, uenatorium cornu collo, arcum cum sagittis manu, ceruum uero exanimem magni ponderis inmenseque magnitudinis, quem sibi obuium casu uenatu ceperat, humeris gestans. Regiam autem ingressus, uniuersos hinc et inde discumbentes diucius immobilis persistens diligenti cepit perlustrari lumine, si forte quempiam inter eos cognosceret, a quo et ipse quis esset innotesci ualeret. *Sed*[3] neminem preter Kaium dapiferum aduertit quem sibi antea cognitum recognoscebat. Quo uiso, ceteris pretergressis, confestim coram eo ad mensam accessit, eum salutauit, suoque prolato uocabulo et quis esset ostenso, ceruum eius ante pedes deposuit, ut sui munusculum non dedignaretur accipere rogitans.

Meriadocus uero, Iuorio intrante, mense cum aliis residens, ut eum conspexit, quis erat falli non potuit, confestimque iunctis pedibus mensam transsiliit, in eius amplexus lacrimis suffusus irruit, eum necis liberatorem uiteque conseruatorem contestans et clamitans. Deinde cum eo ante Kaium acce-

[1] MS. Set. [2] MS. in normis. [3] MS. set.

dens dapiferum, [Fol. 7b.] commemoratis ab eo sibi collocatis beneficiis, ut illius dignaretur, sui gracia, remunerare beniuolenciam suppliciter exorabat. Kaius autem non ignarus quis esset, quippe qui sibi quondam multociens suo solebat obsequi officio, precipue tamen gracia Meriadoci, illum penes se retinuit ac quibus indigebat liberaliter ditauit.

Non multum post hoc temporis effluxerat et Kaius dapifer, ut ipsum Vriano spopondisse commemorauimus, in Scociam proficiscitur, Iuorium et Meriadocum secum adducens; bellorum quippe impedimentis instantibus quibus sub rege A[rturi] semper occupabatur nunquam antea expediri potuit, ut secundum suam promissionem illo proficisci ualuisset. In Scociam igitur ad regem V[rianum] peruenientes, ultra omnem estimacionem Iuorius uxorem, Meriadocus sororem suam sanam et hilarem, ingentique honore et gloria preditam, reperit. Quantum hinc eis exoritur gaudium, quam efficax preteritorum sibi hinc euenerit remedium, ex ipsius rei euentu prependere poteris. Que enim maior leticia quam parentes et amici tristes diucius diuisi se tandem *hilares*[1] reperire, post nimios labores potiri quiete, pauperiemque et miseriam diuitiis et gloria commutare? Universos igitur commune gaudium optinet, plurimi in deliciis dies ob tantam fortune graciam ab eis continuantur preteritique dolores releuantur gaudiis.

[Col. 2.] Cum autem simul inibi commorarentur, ceperunt sui patrui Griffini nequiciam, quam tum in suo genitore, tum et in se nequiter exercuerat, crebro sermone reuoluere et si aliquo modo uicem sue malicie illi reddere ualerent propensius agere. Sed, quia regem A[rturum] illi fauere non ignorabant, sub cuius G[riffinus] degebat imperio, sibi minime successurum sciebant, si sine regis A[rturi] assensu et auxilio aliquid in eum moliri conarentur. Ex communi igitur sentencia et deliberacione oportunum tempus nacti, regem A[rturum] super hiis se apud eum conquesturi adeunt. A quo honorifice suscepti causam aduentus insinuant, flebili

[1] MS. hillares.

querimonia rem gestam ei per ordinem referunt, et ut se super tanto *ulcisceretur*[1] scelere illius genibus prouoluti suppliciter deposcunt. Rex autem A[rturus] regis quodam Caradoci probitatem et sapienciam ad memoriam reducens et tam inauditum Griffini distans facinus ei confestim misso mandauit nuncio, ut die statuta ad suam ueniret curiam, super fratricidio quod sibi imponebatur responsurus. Griffinus uero hactenus fama uulgante suos nepotes quos neci addixerat audito euasisse, semper habens suspectum se non impune laturum scelus quod in eos orsus fuerat, locis opportunis castella condiderat uirisque et pabulo in preparacionem pugne callide sufficienter munierat. Et [Fol. 8.] maxime niualem montem qui Kambrice Snaudune dictum, situ loci ceteris tuciorem, munire curauit, quem quasi asilum constituit omnibus eciam incolis cum paruulis et mulieribus et sua *supellectili*[2] uniuersa super eum tuto abductis et collocatis. Quibus rebus G[riffinus] confisus destinato sibi ab rege A[rturo] nuncio se nequaquam ad eius curiam respondit uenturum, vnde A[rturus] nimium comm[o]diis instructa militum copia cum Vriano rege Scocie contra eum ilico ascendit.

Griffinus uero, cognito ipsius aduentu, omnes uiarum transitus quibus Kambria adiebatur antea obstruxerat, una sola relicta peruia, que hinc et inde imminencium rupium tam artis arcebatur faucibus, uti non nisi unum post alium uiatorem caperet. Hanc quoque ipse G[riffinus], armatorum stipatus cateruis, obsidens, regem A[rturum] inibi, nusquam alias reperto transeundi aditu, meare conantem facili repellebat iniuria. Quo dum A[rturus], nescius quid faceret, in transeundo moras necteret, Sadocus et Duneuuallus—illi duo proceres quos a Griffino pueros petisse superius ostendimus—collecta et conducta ualida multitudine militum, inprouisi parte alia in illius irrupere prouinciam flammaque et cede nulli parcentes etati quoquouersus depopulabantur. Cuius rei G[riffinus], percepto nuncio, suis pereuntibus succursum

[1] MS. usciscеretur. [2] MS. supplectili.

ire contendens, uallem quam [Col. 2.] obsederat incustoditam reliquit, aciemque contra duos prefatos proceres direxit. Sicque, libero A[rturo] patefacto introitu, omnem statim illas Scilleas fauces traiecit exercitum, Griffinumque insecutus in quodam o[p]pido preardua rupe constructo obsedit, erectisque in circuitu aggeribus, inpugnare cepit. Feceruntque ipsi machinas contra machinas, seque uiriliter propugnantes fortiter restiterunt. Horum extrinsecus iuges fiebant assultus; illi econtra cotidie subitos in eos *moliebantur*[1] excursus. Modo telorum balistarumque iactus eminus percrebrescere, modo congressiones militum cominus uideres ferucocere; modo distinctis aciebus dextrisque consertis in mutuam cedem aduerse irruebant caterue, resque maximo agebatur] discrimine.

At rex A[rturus], loci posicione diligencius inspecta, ...[2] et suimet natura eciam absque propugnatore ualde muniebatur—una namque tantum ex parte, in ipso decliui montis latere, difficilime ascendebatur, tantaque erecta celsitudine, ut uix ad ipsius culmen telorum iactus pertingeret—perpendensque inclusorum excursibus municipii capiundi dilacionem fieri, eos artius propensiusque expungnare statuit. Fossam igitur amplam et profundam ante ipsas ualuas oppidi ducere precipit, utque eorum refrenaret excursus et, si uiribus non posset, uel eos fame ad dedicionem cogeret. [Fol. 8b.] Deinde per girum, silua succisa, aggeres quam plurimi hinc et inde eriguntur, unde crebri iactus uoluebantur lapidum iaculacionesque agebantur missilium. Ad hec Griffinus, obsidionem artatam totumque aduertens negocium in uirtute consistere, singulis quibusque eorum machinamentis contraria obiciebat, omni elaborans conamine, ut nequaquam ascribi ualeret inercie, si sese quoquomodo deuinci *contigisset.*[3] Ratum tamen habebat, se nullius uiribus nisi sola fame submittendum. Quodque ita prouenit; toto namque triennio semper hostibus inuincibilis restitit, donec uictrix uincencium ei

[1] MS. molliebantur.
[2] *There is no break in the* MS. *here but evidently some words are wanting.*
[3] MS. contigesset.

nimia fames ingruit, que citius omni robore mentes robustorum flectere et ad dedicionem solet compellere. Quid ultra? Famis peste ingruente G[riffinus] conpulsus se in regis A[rturi] misericordia dedidit. Arturus autem se de eo misericordiam habiturum negauit, nisi suorum parium iudicio procerum. Jussu igitur regis A[rturi] proceres ad iudicium exeunt, quorum censura eum capitali addixit sentencie. Iniustum namque omnibus uidebatur, illum diucius uiuere, quem tantum facinus in fratrem et nepotes constabat commisisse. Data itaque sentencia, deo eius ultore nequicie, Griffinus capite plectitur.

Postquam igitur G[riffinus] merita exsoluit supplicia, uniuerse primatus Kambrie, rege A[rturo] annuente, Meriadoci [Col. 2.] cessit dominio. Sed ipse, ut *probus*[1] iuuenis, maioris honoris apprecians se in florenti etate probitatibus exercere miliciamque expertum iri quam domi residens desidia torpescere, suum socerum Urianum, regem Scocie, conuenit, et, quid apud se deliberarat innotescens, om[n]em Kambrie prouinciam eius tu[i]cioni commisit—tali condicione inter se sanctita, ut quamdiu experiunde ipse uoluisset uacare milicie, tam diu sub eius tutela regnum Kambrie consisteret, ubi autem in pace reuerteretur, ut paterno iure sibi debitum ad suum, si sibi placeret, rediret imperium. Nondum tamen quam terram peteret deliberacione habita, interim in curia regis A[rturi] perhendinabat, donec disposuisset, quo ad propositum opus tenderet.

Rex autem A[rturus] per idem tempus apud urbem liber parumper a bellorum inquietudinibus morabatur. Cui semper euenire solebat, ut, quociens eum aliquamdiu aliquorsum perhendinare contigisset, semper tociens alicuius magni negocii occurrebat euentus. Quod et tunc accidit. Miles enim quidam, Niger Miles de Nigro Saltu dictus, ad eius curiam aduenit, Nigrum Saltum suum esse calumpnians, nulliusque nisi sui illum debere subiacere dominio astipulans, quem rex A[rturus] ut maioris potestatis sibi nitebatur auferre.

[1] MS. probet.

Econtra rex respondebat predictum Nigrum Saltum sui iuris dumtaxat existere, id sibi assumens in argumentum, quod genitor suus, rex Vterpendragon, duos diuersi [Fol. 9.] generis in eodem saltu quondam nigros apros siluestres posuerit, ex quibus omnis grex pecorum qui in illo habebatur processerit. Ad hoc Nigri Militis de Nigro Saltu erat responsum, quod, licet minime prefatos nigros apros illius recognosceret, se tamen eorum eo facto libenter liberam ei concessurum capturam, quo Nigri Saltus possessione et dominio sibi licite uti liceret. "Verumptamen," ait "O rex, si ex rerum euentu huius controuersie consistat probacio, mihi nempe censura iusticie pocius assentire uidebitur, qui et ex ipsius Nigri Saltus effectu auita suffundar nigredine et Niger Miles de Nigro Saltu ex ipsius Nigri Saltus mihi nomen diriuetur nomine." Hinc igitur inter eos causarum discerpsiones et controuersiarum oriuntur litigia. At, ubi discerptantibus finis esse non potuit, isto in calumpnia procaciter instante, rege quoque e diuerso illam procacius infirmare nitente, tandem res parum suorum procerum iudicio examinanda committitur, ut, quod illi inter regem et suum militem, equitate dictante, decreuissent, dictata equitas utrumque sequi compelleret rerum. Niger Miles de Nigro Saltu, illos quod magis regis gracie cederet quam quod ad suum profectum proueniret decreturos non dubitans, sanius et decencius esse duxit, id quod sui iuris calumpniabatur constare suis uiribus disracionare quam suspecto aliorum arbitrio committere, dum [Col. 2.] ratum et inmutabile sciebat futurum quicquid iudicii *pertulisset examine.*[1] Ergo coram omni concilio medius prosiliit et "Quia," ait "O rex, te mihi ex aduerso huic cause patrocinari conspicio, istorum me iudicio committere non audeo, quos procul dubio quod tibi pocius quam mihi succedat decreturos agnosco. Vnde, quia preiudicium incurrere pertimesco, id quod calumpnior me propriis uiribus contra xl^ta e tuis quos uolueris disracionatum offero, ut scilicet hiis singulis xl diebus unum qui agat duellum aduer-

[1] MS. pretulisset exanime.

sum me ad Nigrum Saltum dirigas. Quibus si preualuere potuero, simul et in causa preualeam; si uero contingat succumbere una et mea causa succumbat." Placuit regi et omnibus que dixerat, omniumque in hoc conuenit assensus non parum admirancium eum aduersus tot et tam fortes regis A[rturi] capigenas solum audere inire conflictum. Erat autem Niger Miles de Nigro Saltu iuuenis quidem sed miles peroptimus qui nullius umquam formidauerit congressum.

In dictum igitur duellum, loco et tempore statuto, iniciatur, ad quod agendum singulis diebus unus a rege A[rturo] miles dirigitur. Sed omnes, uno homine *excepto*,[1] omnes a Nigro Milite de Nigro Saltu prostrati, deuicti et sub nomine captiui ad eum remissi sunt. Iamque ceteris sinistro fato transcursis, e quadragenario numero tres tantummodo dies restabant, cum rex A[rturus], inmodice afflictus, tum pudore, suos ualidiores [Fol. 9b.] equites ab uno deuinci, tum eciam dampno quod sibi ea de causa perpendebat oriri, Kaium dapiferum suum aduocauit, quem et sic allocutus est: "*Intolerabili*[2] michi mens merore premitur nullaque per diuersa cogitacionum distracta quiete perfruitur, cui nunquam quicquam quam in presenti obrepsit pudibundius. Ecce namque tot mei famosos campigenas quos bello misimus, pro dolor! ab uno subigi, tot uiros robustos ab uno pudet eneruari, in quorum singulis, quia meam causam agere noscuntur, tociens me uinci confundor, quociens ipsi ab aduersario expungnantur. Et de quo celebre hactenus ubique ferebatur, quempiam meorum militum mille aliis preualere solere, nunc e conuerso, uerso fortune filo, mille meorum nequeunt hunc resistere. Igitur quia strenuiores mei exercitus hosti inerti loco cesserunt et dies xl^{mus} duobus dumtaxat interpositis instat diebus, uiuaci utendum est consilio, ut uel saltim hiis iij diebus nostri simul *pudoris*[3] et dampni resarciatur cumulus. Vnde necesse censui te incrastinum ad initum debere proficisci duellum, quem uirtute et industria ceteris sepius ualenciorem expertus sum et

[1] MS. excepti. [2] MS. Intollerabili. [3] MS. pudores.

cuius est officium, aliis deficientibus, pro me semper laboris subire dispendium commilitonibusque uexatis et abactis auxilii conferre subsidium. Quod si te eciam uictrix manus hostilis eidem quo ceteros inuoluerit discrimini, meus profecto nepos Waluuanius [Col. 2.] contra eum conflictum die sorcietur sequenti. Illum quoque si isdem infortunii casus merserit, ipsemet die extrema ad singulare illius certamen progrediar, quo aut totum cum dedecore perdam seu certe mei esse dominii Nigrum Saltum uirtuose decernam. Vade ergo et ut summo sis presto diluculo sedulus preuide." Kaius: "Tanta oracionis prolixitate opus non erat tue mentis scire placitum michi; nolueris ratum haberi preceptum. Presto ero et rem quo melius potero perficere curabo." Perrexit igitur atque secretius cum amicis secedens, quam lepide, quam generose, quamque uiriliter rem gereret cum eis deliberabat.

Hoc ubi Meriadocus comperit, qui iam ante triennium ab eodem Kaio ad militarem nobiliter fuerat promotus ordinem, ad eum adcessit atque an uerum esset quod de eo audierat inquisiuit. Quo respondente uerum, cepit Meriadocus eum rogare, ut se sui loco duellum cum Nigro Milite de Nigro Saltu sineret committere, dicens indecens nimis esse et sue glorie minime expedire, ut cum illo confligeret a quo tot probos patebat deuictos; quia qui maioris uirtutis hactenus ceteris habitus fuerat si et ipse uictus sortem incurrisset uictorum, maiori nempe quam alii exponeretur obprobrio, quippe dum ad hoc eligebatur ut omnes alios ulcisceretur. De se uero si contigisset deuinci, nec sermonem asserebat habendum; si autem triumphum de tociens triumphante potuisset [Fol. 10.] *nancisci*,[1] non solum sibimet sed eciam illi laudis fauorem adquireret, quia uirtus et probitas militis est honor et gloria principis. Kaius autem ad hec illius iuuente *inualitudinem*[2] sibique inexpertam causans haberi miliciam, illum respondit qui se sue commisit fidei sin[e] causa tanto nolle destinari periculo, quantus ex bellorum solet prouenire euentu uel

[1] MS. nanccisci. [2] MS. inuallitudinem.

dispendio. Demum tamen, prefatis atque multis aliis racionibus flexus, ei quod petebat de eius non diffidens uirtute concessit, plurimum eum hortatus, ut sic studeret exequi negocium, quatenus non uituperium sed laudis utrique adipisci mererentur brauium.

Meriadocus igitur sub ipso diei crepusculo, armis, ut decebat, instructus, sonipedem ascendit atque ad Nigrum Saltum, moderaciori tamen gressu, ne equ[u]s *anhelus*[1] fatisceret, contendit.[2] Ambiebat autem ipsum Nigrum Saltum fluuius latus et profundus, qui, quasi limes et diuisio, terram regis A[rturi] ab ipso saltu dirimebat. Ad quem Meriadocus perueniens equo descendit, faleras deposuit, se in recenti herba parumper refrigerare et spaciari equum uoluntando permisit. Deinde, crine composito, singulisque membris leni manu comptis et detersis, iterum cornipedem stratum ascendit. Vado autem quo transiturus erat reperto, bucina, sicut alii ante fecerant, [Col. 2.] insonuit, quo Niger Miles de Nigro Saltu militem qui secum congrederetur aduenisse cognosceret. Niger autem Miles de Nigro Saltu, sonitu percepto bucine, arma statim corripuit, ac, equo ascenso, se cursu precipiti ei obuium dedit, quique[3] in medio ipsius uadi transitu ei occurrens cum illo congressus est. At Meriadocus, equum cursu, lanceam inpulsu, caucius dirigens, splendidum ei ferrum sub ore stomachi inflixit, et, cum ipso ictu dextram fortiter infringens ac in latus artificiose retorquens ipsum inpulsum prona petere compulit. Moxque lanceam scuto infixam deserens, stricto mucrone, in eum in declino uno pede scansili retento pendentem irruit; nasumque cassidis leua arripiens quasi ei *caput*[4] amputaturus institit. Niger uero Miles de Nigro Saltu, supplices ad eum manus protendens, ut secum paucis, pace interposita, colloqui liceret flagitare cepit. Cuius precibus

[1] MS. hanelus.

[2] *Here in the* MS. *followed the words:* Ambiebat autem ipsum Nigrum Saltum moderaciori, etc.—contendit, *a confusion of the preceding and following sentences. The scribe, however, later on observed the mistake and marked the words* vacat.

[3] que *here, as occasionally elsewhere in this text, means* also. [4] MS. capud.

cedens Meriadocus dextram cohibuit et quid dicere uellet annuit. Qui super equum erectus "Multas cum multis" ait "congressiones inij, et nunquam me forc[i]orem nec eciam mei parem usque hodie reperire ualui. Tui autem inpulsum impetu omnis me protinus pristina uirtus reliquit, nec alterius modi mihi tua est experta inpulsio, quam si celi et terre una adinuicem, me medio existente, fieret collisio. Dic igitur mihi quis sis, miles eggregie, cui procul dubio etas [Fol. 10b.] maturior incomparabilem uidetur spondere uirtutem, quem eciam nunc inberbem tante fortitudinis comitatur effectus." Meriadocus: "Mei generis originem nunc superfluo duco retexere; pandam quod ad presens spectat negocium, me, militem regis A[rturi], hunc Nigrum Saltum contra te disracionatum esse legatum." Cui ille: "Te ipsius militem equidem sum patenter expertus teque Nigrum Saltum aduersum me decreuisse prossus fateor." Gladiumque uagina extrahens ei ab cuspide in signum uictorie tradidit. "Obsecro tamen," subiunxit, "ut tue propaginis seriem mihi notifices, quia tante fortitudinis tanteque pulcritudinis indolem non reor ex humili plebe descendisse." Tunc Meriadocus, cuncta que pretaxauimus replicans, omnium suorum lineam generacionis natalium, prospera et aduersa que pertulerat, sueque mentis ad milicie exercicium propositum, singillatim patefecit. Quibus auditis, "Iuste," ait Niger Miles de Nigro Saltu "tanto oriundus stemmate, tanta animi uirtute, corporisque *precellis*[1] uigore. Nec me pudet aliis semper inuincibilem a *tali*[2] deuinci qualem te iam signis patentibus euidenter comprobaui. Insuper et quicquid mei est tui ex nunc dicioni submitto, meque, quocumque perrexeris, ad uniuersa que peragere uolueris inseperabilem tibi spondeo futurum comitem, quo nec fideliorem nec magis necessarium te reperturum estimo. Pro insipiente reputabitur qui alteri nostrum, altero presente, aliquid mali moliri uoluerit." Hec dicens, ceruicem ad *Meriadoci*[3] genua suppliciter flexit seque ipsius imperio

[1] MS. procellis. [2] MS. tale. [3] MS. Merodiaci.

[Col. 2.] et dicioni subdidit. Meriadocus autem, quod sibi a tanto uiro offerebatur indignum renuere iudicans, ipsius dedicionem cum subieccione gratuito suscepit animo. Deinde inuicem amplexi simul ad curiam regis A[rturi] properabant, accepta ab eo fide, interposita cum securitate fidelitate, ut quo aduiueret suo in obsequio fidelis persisteret.

Omnibus autem xl diebus quibus contra Nigrum Militem de Nigro Saltu duellum agebatur nunquam rex A[rturus] cibum sumere consueuerat, donec qui missus fuerat remeasset. Illoque die de Meriadoco quam de aliis magis sollicitus et ipse inpastus remansit et nullum e suis cibari permisit, quousque cognosceret cuius fortune euentus incurrisset. Moram autem Meriadoco diucius nectente, iussit quendam rex A[rturus] summam arcem ascendere, si quoquam eum repedantem aduerteret. Speculator uero, *turri conscensa*[1] oculisque contra uiam que ad Nigrum Saltum ducebat erectis, "Quendam" exclamauit "aduenientem longius intueor, quem incessus moderacior et splendor armorum Meriadocum testantur. Tri[p]licem enim loricam habebat auream, scutum, interlucentibus gemmis, aureis totum obductum laminis, in cuius equi falleris nil nisi et pallor electri et fulua auri radiabat species. Sed et alium" ait "a dextra equitem nige[r]rimis armis secum adducit, quem, quantum arma et gestus indicant, Nigrum Militem de Nigro Saltu esse prenuncio."

[Fol. 11.] Rex autem hoc pre admiracione credere non potuit, sedque friuolum esse asserens quod annunciabat dicebat tam probum et exercitatum militem ab inberbi *adolescente*[2] inpossibile fore deuinci. Illis autem inde sermocinantibus et diuersa proferentibus, Meriadocus cum Nigro Milite de Nigro Saltu, quem manu ducebat, regiam dignus omnibus spectaculo factus subiit ac ante regem et eius primates progrediens "Tuam" ait, "O rex, causam decreui; Nigrum Saltum, unde causa agebatur, tibi adquisiui; et, si inde teneris dubius, ecce Nigrum Militem de Nigro Saltu, qui illum sui calumpnia-

[1] MS. turi concessa. [2] MS. adoloscente.

batur dominij, propriis tibi uiribus subactum adduco. Nunc ergo premia que uictori spopondisti exsolue, ne et ego remuneracionis immunis et tu beneficii uidearis ingratus." Huiusmodi enim donum rex A[rturus] singulis ad duellum proficiscentibus proposuerat, ut, si quis Nigrum Militem de Nigro Saltu expungnasset, quicquid rediens ab eo peteret, impetraret. Cui rex "Splendido" respondit "et opulento dignus censeris premio; pete quod placuerit, feres procul dubio quicquid nostra sullimitas tua uirtute dignum perpenderit." Meriadocus "Multos tuorum" ait "huius rei examinacione uexasti, que mei est terminata obsequio. Ecce, habes quod optasti, possides quod calumpniabaris, decreuisti unde certabas. Age ergo liberaliter, ut liberalem decet in liberalem [Col. 2.] uirum, ut mei gracia Nigri Saltus illi libera restituatur possessio, quam se mei causa desiderasse conqueritur. In hoc enim toto mee summa pencionis consistit, ne suo iure nobilem uirum contingat destitui, cuius probitas pocius exigit augeri quam minui." Arturus "Licet" ait "pro uoto tibi petenda que placere[n]t proposuimus, Nigri Saltus tamen instanciam nos fecisse meminimus; quo excepto, quicquid aliud animo sederit gratanter annuimus. Ridiculo quippe et mentis ascriberetur inconstancie, si tam leuis estimem precij, in cuius adquisicione adeo desudaui. Te ergo aliunde remunerari expete, quia Nigro Saltu nostrum neutrum mihi exstat gratum donare." Confidentes autem illi ipsius familiares et consiliarij proceres et primi palacij eum hortabantur, ne uirum bene de se meritum promisso et debito cassaret premio; quod nec illius probitatem nec ipsiusmet dignitatem decebat, "Et si quod maius est" aiebant "a te expeteret, annuere debueras, presertim dum hoc exposcit, quod propriis uiribus adquisiuit. Justum namque est, ut inde remuneracionis sumat stipendia, in cuius adquisicione laboris est perpessus dispendia." Quorum tandem rex Arturus credens consilio Nigrum Saltum Meriadoco ad *quidlibet*[1] uellet—datum scilicet uel possessum—iure concessit perpetuo,

[1] MS. quorumlibet.

quem ipse Meriadocus statim in regis presencia Nigro Militi de Nigro Saltu liberum et quietum restituit, salua subieccione et fidelitate, quam Nigrum Militem de Nigro [Fol. 11b.] Saltu sibi fecisse *retulimus*.[1]

Duello igitur contra Nigrum Militem de Nigro Saltu pro ipso Nigro Saltu completo, die sequenti Roseus Miles de Roseo Saltu adest, qui hanc (*sic*) impari calumpnia in regem inuectus Arturum se ab eo conquerebatur auito *fundo*,[2] Roseo uidelicet Saltu, destitui. Super quo dum inter eos uehemens uerborum accio, racione postposita, nil equitatis censeret, demum Roseus Miles de Roseo Saltu suam causam duelli *examini*[3] contra quemlibet e regis militibus commisit, Rosei Saltus libera possessione concessa cui prouenisset uictoria. Mittitur et contra hunc Meriadocus, illius congressum ceteris formidantibus; qui, non minori in istum quam in priorem usus uirtute, prostrauit, deuicit et cepit, sibique socium effectum et sue dicioni deditum ad regem deduxit Arturum. A quo in laboris remuneracionem, ut ipsemet postulauerat, Roseo Saltu Meriadocus donatus et ille quoque Roseo *Militi*[4] de Roseo Saltu quod ei surripuerat reddidit.

Huic Candidus Miles de Candido Saltu succedit, qui non dispari accione in ius ductus, discerptacionum controuersiis sibi non prospere cedentibus, singulare certamen proponit. Cum Meriadoco in uado fluminis Candidum Saltum circumfluentis congreditur, a quo et deuincitur. Singuli quippe saltus singulis amnibus ambiebantur, in quorum uadorum transitu semper ab eis est mu[Col. 2.]tua facta congressio. Candidus igitur Miles de Candido Saltu a Meriadoco deuictus sibi, sicut alii, subicitur, in eius societate recipitur et quem amiserat Candidum Saltum iterum, Meriadoco donante, assequitur.

Meriadocus igitur, postquam hos tres sibi confederauit proceres, scilicet Nigrum Militem de Nigro Saltu, Roseum Militem de Roseo Saltu, et Candidum Militem de Candido

[1] MS. reculimus. [2] MS. fundeo. [3] MS. exanimi. [4] MS. multi.

Saltu, uiam quam animo prefixerat ad inquirendam et exercendam miliciam accelerabat. Regni itaque Kambrie, ut pretaxauimus, suo socero Vriano, regi Scotie, tuenda et disponenda negocia commisit, itineris tanti dispendio res necessarias accurauit, se sociosque, quomodo dicebat, armis, equis et preciosis indumentis instruxit et ad imperatorem Alemannie properare instituit. Missis namque longe lateque nunciis, sciscitatus fuerat quenam terrarum regio bellorum subiaceret legibus, relatumque sibi fuerat inter imperatorem Alemannie et Gundebaldum, regem terre ex qua nemo reuertitur, maximas bellorum geri discordias; Gundebaldus quippe, rex terre ex qua nemo reuertitur, unicam filiam imperatoris uiolenter rapuerat nullaque condicione flecti potuit, ut eam patri suisque redderet natalibus. Hoc seminarium discidii inter eos existerat et ad irarum causas grauissimas bellorumque discrimina instimulauerat. Inuitabantque et conducebant a remotis terrarum recessibus milites quoscunque magne probitatis audierant [Fol. 12.] et crebros excursus mutuasque congressiones omni pene die inuicem agebant. Fiebantque utrarumque parcium cedes innumerabiles, desolaciones urbium, rapina rerum familiarum et quod hiis est grauius indiscreta captiuorum seruitus ciuium. Inter que probitas et uirtus uniuscuiusque in propatulo facile habebatur et quos laudis deceret premia, quosue uituperacionis manere[n]t opprobria, omnium patebat obtutibus. Quibus rebus Meriadocus compertis, cunctis ordinatis et dispositis, illo cum sociis iter arripuit, et, terra marique multis traiectis dispendiis, ad imperatorem sanus et *incolumis*[1] cum omnibus peruenit. Imperator autem, postquam quis esset et cur ad se uenisset audiuit, eo quod decuit eum honore suscepit atque inter primos stipendarios sui exercitus eum constituit. Non multum primo uero, dum ad quelibet certamina singulosque congressus se probius et uirtuosius ceteris omnibus iugiter ageret, uniuersis gregariis conducticiis et stipendariis militibus ab imperatore preficitur; quorum nume-

[1] MS. incolumus.

rus pene usque ad xiij milia recensebatur. Maiores quippe probitates ipse solus cum suis sociis patrabat cotidie quam maxima pars imperialis exercitus; vnde non solum apud imperiales sed eciam apud regem Gundebaldum eius nomen celebre ferebatur.

Quodam autem die prepeti cursu *anhelo*[1] equo nuncius ad imperatorem [Col. 2.] uenit, referens Saguncium, principem milicie regis Gundebaldi, suam terram cum ualida manu intrasse prouinciamque quoquouersus depredari. Imperator autem *ascito*[2] confestim Meriadoco iussit cum suis caternis hostibus suum regnum depeculiantibus occurrere predamque quam ceperant de manibus eorum excutere. Meriadocus uero, nil moratus, milites in iiii^or^ turmas diuisit, quarum unam secum retinuit, tribus autem reliquis suos tres socios prefecit. Fines autem illius prouincie quidam fluuius profundo cingebat gurgite, quem hostes prede ducti cupidine uado transsierant quemque eciam regredientibus illis traicere erat necesse et loco eodem, quia nusquam alias uadum *reperiebatur.*[3] Circa huius fluminis ulteriorem ripam Meriadocus Nigrum Militem de Nigro Saltu cum sua turma transmisit, ut, si hostes in reuertendo suam manum, fluuio traiecto, euaderent, a Nigro Milite de Nigro Saltu inopini exciperentur. Candido uero Militi de Candido Saltu precepit cum suis, ut aduersariis predam eripere[n]t, dum ipsemet cum eisdem congrederetur. Roseum quoque Militem de Roseo Saltu, cui iiii^tam^ partem exercitus commiserat, non longe in insidiis constituit esse, qui sibi belligeranti, si opus esset, ferret subsidium. Hoc igitur ordine disposito exercitu, ipse ocius aduersarios peciit, quorum itineris et accionis consilium per exploratores totum certius inuestigauerat. Casu autem euenit quod eis ad predicti fluuii *transitum*[4] [Fol. 12b.] occurrit, maximam predam uirorum, mulierum, pecudum et diuersarum *supellectilum*[5] secum ducentibus. In eos igitur irruens

[1] MS. hanelo. [2] MS. acscito. [3] MS. repperiebatur.
[4] MS. transsitum. [5] MS. suppellectilum.

primo impetu eorum agmen deiecit, quia et preda onusti incedebant et in amnis transitu maxime impediebantur. At tamen Saguncius ad eorum primum congressum vniuersam predam cum sarcinis iussit quam tocius in unum infra agmen coaceruari militibusque per cuneos expeditis, strictis gladiis, in se irruentibus resistere. Discriminosum igitur inter eos est bellum conflatum, dum hii totis uiribus niterentur *que*[1] perdiderant excutere, illi econtra uiriliter contenderent capta retinere. Meriadocus autem hinc et inde furibundus partans armatorum agmina nunc more bellue in hostes irruebat et prosternebat, modo suorum animos uariis excohortacionibus ad certandum audaciores efficiebat. Ipse quidem uirtute Saguncius autem numero militum precellebat. Pungna uero magna protrahitur parte diei, licetque innumerabilis hostium multitudo undique cateruatim a Meriadoco pessumdaretur, anceps tamen semper mansit uictoria, donec Roseus Miles de Roseo Saltu, qui non eminus infra nemoris abdita pro subsidio latuerat, cum sua cohorte inprouisus a latere in eos excurreret aciesque confertas dissiparet. Turbatis autem et disiectis ordinibus, tunc primum abductam predam pertinacibus calumpniatoribus liberam deseruerunt sueque saluti [Col. 2.] fuga consuluerunt. Et quia insequencium ab omni latere celis micantibus uia euadendi nusquam patebat, estuosus gurgitis fluctus precipites irruperunt, eo uiam querentes, quo nunquam ante uiator transierat. Presens tamen discrimen iuuit astucia; equites quippe super equos amnis medio, quo maior raptus aque ferebatur, magno spacio interiecto, duobus in locis constiterunt, ut rigor aque reliquo transeunti exercitui facilior fieret. Verum idem fluuius nocte preterita aquis niualibus ex uicinis montibus defluentibus adeo inundauerat, quod eciam ipsi equites egre in eo consisterent. Quia tamen mortis urgebat necessitas, pedites cum equitibus mixtim certatimque se in profundum dederunt, leuiorem mortem fluuium quam hostilem gladium sibi illaturum credentes. Submersi sunt itaque fere omnes qui flumen transituri priores ingressi

[1] MS. quo.

sunt; sed eorum mors ceteris salus fuit; tot enim tunc undis perierunt, ut ceteri expeditum eorum compara[tum] transitum haberent. Sed, flumine transito, dum letarentur se discrimen euasisse, in aliud inciderunt. Niger quippe Miles de Nigro Saltu, qui, ut prediximus, illo a Meriodoco premissus fuerat, illos flumen transgressos excepit, necemque fugientes nece affecit. Meriadocus quoque, ereptam predam Candido militi de Candido Saltu commendans, eos insecutus est extremosque fugiencium exicio dabat. Saguncius autem, ubi suos a fronte et a tergo uidit occumbere, sibi maturius preuidens, ad [Fol. 13.] quandam annosam siluam que in uicino erat cum paucis elabitur. Cuius fugam dum Meriadocus cognouisset, Nigro Militi de Nigro Saltu totum relinquens exercitum ad delendas uel capiendas reliquias hostium, ipse fugientem Saguncium per opaca silue, tantum cc^tis^ expeditis secum assumptis militibus, persequi festinauit, quem mangnopere uiuum cupiebat capere. Niger igitur Miles de Nigro Saltu cum Roseo Milite de Roseo Saltu, hostes sine miseracione cedentes, uniuersis aliis interfectis, pene usque ad vi milia captiuorum cum multimodis spoliis abducunt atque Candidum Militem de Candido Saltu, qui trans flumen cum excussa preda remanserat, pecierunt.

Interea Meriadocus fugientem Saguncium per densitatem silue cum cc^tis^ militibus persequebatur, eum minime comprehensurus; jam enim a conspectu eius remocius euaserat, atque deinde per quandam strictam semitam a uia circa declinans, iter quod ad suam ducebat patriam, silua egressus arripuerat. Erat autem eadem silua uasta nimis et horrida, quam cuius esset latitudinis uel longitudinis nullus unquam rimari potuit: uidelicet, ob feritatem inmanium beluarum eam inhabitancium et ob innumera et incredibilia fantasmata que per siluam uiantes uexabant et deludebant. Tot quippe fantasiarum in ea apparebant species, ut nullus transeuncium ab earum illusionibus immunis effugeret. Quorundam quoque animos, humano sensu, tum *terroribus*,[1] tum suis trans-

[1] MS. terrioribus.

formacio[Col. 2.]nibus, priuatos, quasi in extasim ad alia secula raptos dementes effecerant. Meriadocus igitur, predictam siluam ingressus, toto spacio estiui diei post meridiem in eam procedebat. Vesperascente uero, in quodam saltu cum suis descendit, atque, equis in recenti herba pabulatum dimissis, membra pansaturus sub diuo accubuit, suis uigilibus precipiens, ut statim primo diluculo ad proficiendum excitarentur. Verum se collocantes, sompnum capturi, uix oculos clauserant, dum ecce aurora albescente, ut sibi pro uero uidebatur, diescebat. *Vigiles*[1] itaque Meriadocum adierunt, eumque excitantes, "Domine," inquiunt, "surge; iam enim dies *lucescit*."[2] Ille enim magno sompno grauatus quam alleuiatus, ualde admirans, excitantibus se dixit: "Vix sompnum cepi, et nunc dies est? vbi est ergo nox? Certe aut ego prolixiori solito sompno indigeo aut nox solito breuior est." Jussit tamen eadem hora surgere *et*[3] iter inceptum carpere. Pergentibus uero lux semper clarior sole ascendente apparebat, ita ut, dum necdum miliarium et semis pergissent, ultra primam horam diei esse iudicarent. Circa quod tempus diei in quandam planiciem latissimam peruenerunt, in quam sepe Meriadocus cum imperatore uenatum ierat. In ipsa autem planicie subito sibi ingencia edificia apparuerunt, miri et preclari operis columpnis celatis et depictis, celsis laquearibus, ex lapide marmoreo et porphiritico tabulatis parietum constructis et constratis, [Fol. 13b.] omnia circumcirca alta fossa ualloque prerupto cingente. At Meriadocus ob tantorum edificiorum tam subitam structuram non parum obstupefactus "Miror," *inquit*,[4] "O commilitones mei, de tanta rei nouitate quam uideo, unde hec domus marmoree eiusmodique rerum apparatus qui nostris patent oculis adueneri[n]t. Necdum quippe dies xxi^us^ est, ex quo in hac ipsa planicie cum imperatore et quibusdam e nobis uenatus sum, quo temporis spacio nec tantum opus perfici nec, si posset perfici, a nobis utique quiuisset celari. Procedamus tamen et cuius sint habitacula

[1] MS. Vigeles. [2] MS. lucessit. [3] MS. ad. [4] MS. inquid.

uel a quibus constructe inuestigemus." Illis igitur procedentibus, subito ante ianuas palacii pueri pene xxx apparuerunt, speciosi ualde, ciclade purpur[e]a et bisso amicti. Qui omnes uenientibus occurrentes Meriadocum *alacri*[1] uultu cum sociis salutauerunt atque ad prandium inuitauerunt. Jam autem hora diei tercia sibi esse uidebatur. Meriadocus autem, quamquam iter inceptum acceleraret, iudicauit tamen ingredi, hac causa precipua, ut inhabitatores cognosceret et res tam mirabilis et stupenda sibi patefieret.

Curiam igitur ingressi sunt, quam maxime multitudinis incognite replebat frequencia, atque ad hostium aule descenderunt. Inde per porphiriticos gradus ascendentes ubi regiam subierunt, in eminenciore domus parte preclarum accubitum aduerterunt sericis pannis nobiliter stratum, in quo femina decoris inestimabilis recu[Col. 2.]babat, quam et lepidi gestus et incomparabilis pulcritudo nitorque glorie non parue nobilitatis esse affirmabant. Tota quippe domus intrinsecus uariis ornamentis erat ornata, nobilesque uiri procerum militumque hinc et inde circumsidebant, diuersis ludis se spaciantes. Quidam enim simulatam pugnam bifaria acie *pyrgis*[2] componebant; alii alearum iacturis operam dabant; nonnulli tesseris iactis euentum lucri uel dampni fortune committebant. Quorum lusum predicta matrona, illorum domina, in accubitu suo iacens, dum contemplaretur, ubi intrantem Meriadocum est intuita, parum se erigens eum lepide prior salutauit et ad se euocauit, omnibus illis iussis assurgere. Ille autem aduocatus audacter processit atque super lectum iuxta eam resedit, suis militibus sparsim per aulam assidentibus. Ad quem uirago "Bene," ait "Meriadoce, ad nos uenistis; multum enim temporis est, ex quo te desiderabam uidere, tuas audiens probitates." Cui ille: "Stupendum est non modice quod uideo et audio, uel quomodo mei faciem aut nomen cognoueris uel quis in hoc loco tantas structuras tam repente condiderit, cum necdum mensis transiit quod hic

[1] MS. alicui. [2] MS. pirgis.

nec unus lapis edificii fuerit." Illa ad hec: "Ne mireris, Meriadoce, si te tuo uocauerim nomine, diu quippe est quod mihi et uultu et nomine haberis cognitus. Sed multum erras de hiis edificiis, que tam subito constructa asseris, quia et hec habitacula sunt a priscis temporibus. Nec hic locus est quem [Fol. 14.] tu esse existimas nec umquam nisi modo in hoc loco fuisti. Nunc autem nobiscum comedes, quam diu placuerit penes nos perhendinaturus." Vacatisque ministris, iussit confestim mensam apponi. Qua apposita, solus quidem Meriadocus iuxta illam ad celsiorem mensam recubuit; milites autem eius mixtim cum aliis discubueruut. Maximus famulatus ministrancium assistebat; splendidus apparatus dapium regalium apponebatur; tot erant fercula, quod numerum excederent, quod sicut postea Meriadocus se astruebat nunquam in aliqua curia uidisse nec tante dulcedinis aliqua degustasse. Verum omnes in communi silencium tenebant, ut nullus in tota aula uel seruiencium aut discumbencium cum considente seu conseruiente aliquid loqueretur.

Quod Meriadocus aduertens, et quia necdum interrogauerat qui essent, circa finem prandii dapiferum ad se uocauit, atque, matrona alias intendente esse curie, quesiuit que gens essent, si sua domina uirum haberet, nomen quoque eiusdem, nec non et cur ita omnes tacerent, ut eciam cum suis militibus qui erant extranei et [quos] eorum uerbis exhilarari debuissent nullus penitus uerbum consereret. Dapifer autem, dum ad interrogata responsum reddere debuisset, ruga in naso contracta, subsannam ei pro responso reddidit. At Meriadocus, eum hoc reputans ludendo fecisse, iterum eum ut quesita sibi inti[Col. 2.]maret blande rogauit. Ille uero iterato, more canis estuantis, linguam ab ore usque ad mentum deorsum exerens, subiuncto cachinno, Meriadocum deridebat. Meriadocus autem, nec tunc quidem rem ut erat intelligens et derisionem adhuc lusum existimans, "Uir" ait "eggregie, quid est quod agas? Ego que michi ignota et tibi bene sunt cognita a te quero et tu mihi responsionis loco contraccionem narium et distorte bucce reddis ualgium. Queso ut uel nunc

demum interrogata mihi *edicas*."[1] Verum dapifer, nichil ei locutus, tercio ad instar auricularium aselli ambas manus circa tempora sparsis digitis agitans, ardentibus oculis, patenti oris rictu, Meriadoco, ac si iam eum deuoraret, incubuit, uultusque eius adeo immutatus est, ut similior demoni quam homini uideretur. Vnde Meriadocus, nimium perterritus, statim e mensa prosilire uoluit. Quod matrona aduertens, quasi irata, dapiferum increpare cepit, "Tolle, tolle," clamitans "nec uiro nobili iniuriam inferas, ne alicuius rusticitatis nota nostram curiam notare ualeat." Tantus autem timor Meriadocum omnesque eius socios eadem hora inuasit, ut, mensa confestim sublata, consurgerent atque tremebundi cum festinacione exirent. Dies autem, quantum ad eorum estimacionem, ad uesperum iam uergebatur. Equis igitur ascensis, non plene miliarium perrexerant [Fol. 14b.] cum noctis tenebre adeo dense incumbebant, ut nullus ab alio aduerti ualeret. Isdem quoque stupor atque insaniaque sibi contigerat, eciam eorum equis incubuit; qua incumbente, in tantum debac[c]hati sunt, quod nullus ex eorum sessoribus eorum aliquem domare uel a precipiti refrenare cursu ualuisset. Dispersi sunt itaque huc illucque per siluam, quo insania equos ferebat, totaque nocte quasi in congressione pungne, admissis equis, sibi occurrentes; equi cum equis uirique cum uiris in occursu mutuo collidebantur. Quique dum inuicem occurrerent, quisque ad alium clamabat, ut cursum sisteret, manibusque extentis, quisque alium quocumque posset loco ac si se mutuo *recepturi*[2] arripiebat. Sed nec equi refrenari nec a se potuerunt retineri. Eorum igitur quam plurimi, collisis membris, tam equorum quam equitum sparsim ceciderunt; alii autem per auia ducti a sociis errauerunt; reliqui omnes, una cum Meriadoco in cuiusdam fluminis profundo gurgite circa matutinum tempus inopini deuecti, usque ad *sellarum*[3] carpellas tumescentibus aquis insederunt. Die autem facto, tunc primum quidem ubi essent cognouerunt, fluuiumque egressi, licet

[1] MS. editas. [2] MS. recenturi. [3] MS. cellarum.

inmenso labore, quinquaginta iiij e suo numero deesse inuenerunt. Meriadocus uero, tantis infortuniis acceptis, magno consternatus est dolore, conuersusque ad socios "O commilitones," *inquit*[1] "dies fantasti[Col. 2.]ca nos deliciis pauit. Sed quo *fuimus*,[2] quos *conuiuas*[3] habuimus, infortunium quod nos secutum est euidenter edocuit. Tamen ob amissionem sociorum magne doleo, quos scio me minime *reperturum*."[4]

Flumen igitur egressi parum a labore fessa membra pausauerunt, indeque in siluam progrediebantur, quorsum irent prorsus ignorantes. Dumque se siluam egressuros sperarent, in interiora eius semper tendebant. Post meridiem aut[em] tempestas ualida est eis exorta, scilicet uis uenti cum mundacione pluuie et coruscacione fulminum terroribusque tonitruum; *quibus*[5] malis in tantum quassati sunt, ut felices iudicarent qui ea tempestate sub tecto manebant. Anxius igitur nimis Meriadocus et nescius quid faceret, inquirebat a sociis si quem in uicino nossent locum, quo sub aliquo edificio a tanta procella possent confugere. Cui unus militum respondit, castellum permaximum in confinio haberi sed neminem umquam illud intrasse qui sine dedecore exierit. Erat autem inter alios tiro quidam, Waldomerus nomine, cognatus ipsius imperatoris, qui, amore ductus, Meriadocum ad bellum *comitatus*[6] fuerat. Hic, tam horride tempestatis semper inualescente turbine, dum iam dies uergebatur ad uesperam et iam ictus tonitruum, coruscaciones fulminum *ferri*[7] ulterius non posse[n]t, cepit a milite querere quorsum esset castellum, quod se nosse prope adesse predixerat, [Fol. 15.] et ut se illo duceret rogare. Ad hec miles: "Ego quidem te, si uis, ad castellum ducam. Sed ipse in castellum minime tecum introibo. Verumptamen predico tibi ingrauissime te peniturum, antequam exeas." Cui Waldomerus "Ne cures" ait; "tantum ad castellum me ducito, quia hic non remanebo." Duxit itaque illum miles ad castellum, quem eciam pene uni-

[1] MS. inquid. [2] MS. fuerimus. [3] MS. conuiuias.
[4] MS. repertinum. [5] MS. quos. [6] MS. comitatum.
[7] MS. ferre.

uersi qui cum Meriadoco erant, exceptis xi tantum militibus, secuti sunt, dicentes se uelle pocius quamlibet experiri fortunam quam sub tanto ibi preditari (*sic*) discrimine. Miles autem qui illos duxerat, ubi fores oppidi attigit, illis ualedicens ad Meriadocum reuersus est, quia iam se cum hiis qui secum remanserant sub umbra annose quercus[1] a procella *contulerat*.[2] Valdomerus igitur, cum ceteris se *comitantibus*[3] castellum ingressus, omnes aditus apertos inuenit sed neminem in toto castello. Intrauerunt autem quandam aulam in superiore turri sitam, auleis copertam, et tapetis undique stratam, in cuius medio ignis lucidissimus accensus ardebat. Stabula quoque equorum in ulteriori ipsius parte erant, satis habundancia prebenda et foragine. Que cum Waldomerus uidisset: "Descendite," clamauit "O socii; optime hospitati sumus. Ecce omnia affatim suppetunt quibus maxime indigebamus. Domus est nobis amata, ignis accensus, iumentis autem sufficiencia pabula in stabulo. Delirauit qui nos ab hoc hospicio [Col. 2.] dehortari contendit." Igitur descendentes equos in stabulis constituerunt, pabula apposuerunt, armisque depositis, focum circumsederunt. Sed dum parumper ibi consedissent, tam ingens timor eos inuasit, ut nullus alium alloqui nec eciam intueri auderet, sed, demissis capitibus, terram tacentes aspiciebant, ac si iam sibi necesse imminere uererentur. Interea illi qui cum Meriadoco remanserant, ingruentibus noctis tenebris, *predicta*[4] tempestate semper in peius uergente, ceperunt se inuicem conqueri, quod non issent cum sociis sed in tanta procella remansissent. Prefatum militem, qui alios ad castellum duxerat, deprecabantur, ut ipsos quoque ad commilitones quam tocius ducere festinaret. Miles autem, quamquam inuitus, dux eis usque ad castella factus est, sed ipse confestim ad Meriadocum rediit. Aduenientibus autem istis, priores a terrore quo tenebantur illorum aduentu admodicum releuati sunt; sed ubique ipsi cum eis fere dimidia hora consederunt, eodem pauore omnes comprehensi exangui-

[1] *In the* MS. *we have* se *after* quercus.
[2] MS. contulerant.
[3] MS. commitantibus.
[4] MS. predictam.

bus similes uidebantur. Meriadocus inter hec in silua cum uno milite consistens, tum aeris intemperie urgente, tum ueritus ne suis militibus sui in absencia aliquid discriminis contingeret; "Duc me" ait "ad socios, cum quibus malo si qua sunt participari pericula quam hic sine illis tutus consistere." Cui miles: "Libenter te ad illos ducam, sed ego huc redibo." Duce igitur milite, Meriadocus [Fol. 15b.] oppidum peciit, et, ductore redeunte, aulam subiit. Quem intrantem cum nemo salutasset nec ei assurgeret, "Qua causa," clamauit "o socii, sic obmutescitis?" Tunc Waldomerus, resumpta audita, *caput*[1] erexit atque "Meriadoce, ne mireris" respondit "nos ita silere; quia tam, immo dico, pauore tenemur, quod nec nos intueri alterutro nobis mens fit." Ad hec Meriadocus "Surgite" ait "quam tocius; nichil aliud quam inercia uos *detinet.*[2] Quid ueremini? Surgite, discumbite, mensam opponite; nimis enim longa ieiunia continuauimus. Ego autem, si in hac domo habentur, que nobis sunt uictui perquiram necessaria." Surgentibus itaque illis et discumbentibus, Meriadocus confestim thalamum unum et alium adiit, sed, in illis nullum reperiens, tercium quoque subiit, in quo puellam mirande forme thoro residentem offendit. Ante quam et mensam positam cum pane et uino sufficienti Meriadocus igitur oblati cibi ductus cupidine iii^es utres uino plenas collo sibi et brachiis suspendit, cophinumque placentis refertum inter manus corripiens, ad socios festinus reuertebatur, nil *prorsus*[3] nec eciam salutacionis uerba locutus cum uirgine. Verum illi properanti quidam procere stature in secundo occurrit thalamo, qui, percuntatus quis esset et cur panem et uinum domini sui furatus fuisset, ex inprouiso cum pungno ei *tempora*[4] eo annisu contudit, ut pene ad pedes eius Meriadocus prosterneretur [Col. 2.] gladiusque quem manutenebat longius propelleretur. Ille autem, de gladio nil cogitans sed ut que rapuerat perferre posset ad socios, citato gressu ab illo in aulam profugit; quibus et allata apposuit, dicens se quo-

[1] MS. capud. [2] MS. detinent. [3] MS. prorssus. [4] MS. timpora.

que ad coquinam iturum. Prius tamen, dum se deliberaret ulcisci de illo qui se percusserat et ensem non inuenisset, confusus parum resedit, quid sibi contigisset pre pudore non *ausus*[1] referre sociis. Vnde dum tristis resideret, ecce quidam a thalamo uenit, ipsius ferens mucronem sibi a puella missum mandante eum rusticum et inertem esse: rusticum, quod se non salutasset et sibi apposita abstulisset, inertem quod contra inermem ense munitus resistere minime ausus fuisset. Gladium autem Meriadocus adeptus confestim coquinam adiit, *lancemque*[2] permaximam optimis ferculis que in ea affatim *reperit*[3] impleuit. Juxta focum autem dormiebat uir inberbis, raso capite, inmanis corporis, qui Meriadoco tumultuante in colligendis epulis exter[r]itus, quasi amens, prosiliit, ueru quo grues assari solebant ambabus manibus arripuit, Meriadocumque iam exeuntem nactus ei inter scapulas tanta ui ueru ingessit, quanta, ut puto, eum exanimem reddidisset, nisi fustis in ictu confracta ictum debilitasset. Ante hostium uero coquine et penes illud puteus altus erat. Meriadocus igitur percussus *lancem*[4] concitus deposuit, suum percussorem per aures—quia capillis care[Fol. 16.]bat—furibundus corripuit, eleuauit, nequiquam renitentem in profundum putei proiecit et cum *lance*[5] dapifera ad socios profugit. Cum quibus et residens eos alacriter hortabatur *comedere*.[6] Illis itaque in summa prandentibus, truculentus satelles, gigantee forme, semitrabem dorso gerens, aulam ingressus est. Qui, quoquouersus torua rotans lumina, "Qui sunt" exclamauit "hii latrones, qui domum domini mei furtim ingressi sunt eiusque cibos more ardalionum diripuerunt et consumpserunt?" Cui cum Meriadocus respondere conaretur, ille excussam fortiter trabem in eos proiecit, cuius ueru *illos*[7] exangues reddidit. At Meriadocus, socios male tractari ab illo non ferens diucius, euaginato gladio, in eum irruit atque in fugam conuertit, fugientique insistens, tam diu per thalamos, per curiam et per nemus eum insectatus est, donec in sequendo eum in domum

[1] MS. audiens. [2] MS. lanccemque. [3] MS. repperit. [4] MS. lanctem.
[5] MS. lancte. [6] MS. commedere. [7] MS. illorum.

quandam armatis plenam circa crepusculum inopinus incidit. Dumque armatorum territus multitudine egredi uellet, omnes in eum solum irruentes ipsum remanere coegerunt. Ille autem, dorso applicato parieti, scutum protendit, uiriliter restitit, nec *ante*[1] tum propugnando, tum impugnando destitit, quousque, ex eis quam plurimis occisis, ceteri ipsius pertinacia uicti ei dextram darent ac libere quo uellet ire permitterent.

Meriadocus igitur ab illis liberatus ad castellum rediit sed sociorum neminem *reperit.*[2] Vniuersi enim pre timore [Col. 2.] fugerant sonipedemque eius cum armis secum duxerant. Nescius itaque quid ageret pedes per siluam solus iter carpebat. Jam autem, sole ascendente, dies claruerat; pergenti uero illi fit obuia mulier, Ueradario residens, sonipedem dextra ducens, lacrimis obducta faciem. Hec a Meriadoco interrogata cur fleret respondet, uirum suum, strenuum militem, paulo ante a duobus spurcissimis latronibus fraude interfectum, se ab illis captam *sed*[3] tunc a sompno pressis fugisse; quem ducebat uelle dare sonipedem qui mortem domini sui ulcisceretur. Spondet ulcionem Meriadocus; equum ascendit; cum illa pergit; unum dormientem opprimit; alter excitus et resistens similem casum luit. Inde digressus, muliere relicta, ut fortuna fauebat, prefatus miles qui in silua illis ad castellum pergentibus remanserat ei occurrit. Quem Meriadocus uidens ualde letatur, ei casus suos exponit, sociorum turbam amissam refert, se uero sapienter egisse, quod ipsius uoluerit parere consilio. Miles autem ad hec eum consolatus cum eo ultra progreditur. Non longius uero processerat et ecce ante se in quadam planicie armatorum turbam incidere conspexerunt. Quibus conspectis, Meriadocus iussit militi ibi subsistere, dum ipse ad cuneum quem uiderant properaret et qui essent inquireret. Subsistit miles; Meriadocus sonipedem post eos admisit, extremosque nactus, suos quos [Fol. 16b.] perdiderat omnes cognouit una cum Waldomero esse socios;

[1] MS. autem. [2] MS. repperit. [3] MS. set.

fortuitu namque uniuersi qui, ut premissum est, ab illo deuiarunt paulo ante in ipsa planicie sibi inuicem occurrerant. Quibus ex insperato uisis, ultra quam credi potest Meriadocus exhilaratus est, quia nunquam se eos recuperaturum crediderat. Milites igitur ex inuencione ducis et dux ex militum recepcione letificari . . . . tractabant . . . .[1] mutuo iam fore sibi capiendum consilium, ne ulterius similia discrimina sua in curia incurrerent. Vnde adinuicem conferentes, dum fere usque ad tria miliaria processissent, clamor et tumultus perualidus, quasi bellancium strepitus, eorum auribus eminus insonuit. Obstupefacti igitur uniuersi se circa ducem fuderunt, ac Meriadocus, id quoque fantasticum esse existimans, remque prescire antequam ipse illo accederet cupiens, duos equites qui unde tantus clamor esset indagarent premisit. Illi autem interim, equis descensis, eorum *reditum*[2] in loco expectabant. Nunci[i] itaque festinantes qua tumultuancium uoces perceperant iter arripiunt. Sed non longius ambierant, cum silua egressi cruentas certancium cateruas pre se offenderunt [et] totam *quoquouersus*[3] terre superficiem [viderunt] cadaueribus occisorum stratam, riuulos effusi sanguinis toto campo diffluere. Puerum igitur quendam cominus extra prelium stantem aduocant, a quo qui esse[n]t ille confligencium turme querunt. Quibus puer: "Exercitus sunt imperatoris et regis [Col. 2.] Gundebaldi." Ad hec illi "Quis" inquiunt "ductor est imperialis excercitus?" Puer: "Tres socii Meriadocij exercitui presunt, quos ipse pridie ad hostium spolia reliquerat, dum ipse Meriadocus Saguntium, ducem Gundebaldi, de bello fugientem persequeretur. Verum quia ipse Meriadocus statuto termino ad illos non rediit, cum uniuerso quem regebant exercitu qua eum isse putabant uia compendiosiori in eius subsidium illum secuti sunt, uerentes ne aliquo tardaretur discrimine. Sed uiarum inscii cum inconsultius fines hostium intrassent, a rege Guntranno, fratre Gundebaldi, qui in uicinis regnat, hodie matutius tempore

[1] *No break in* MS. *but some words seem to have been lost in this passage.*
[2] MS. redditum.
[3] qua quo uersus.

insidiis circumuenti sunt. Jamque, ut ipsimet cernere potestis, eorum usque ad internicionem ceditur exercitus, illique iam tanto coartantur periculo, ut in proximo aut morientes occumbent aut certe ducentur captiui; hostium quippe innumerabiles conuenere copie. Verum nec uictoribus leta relinquitur uictoria; omnes enim ex aduersa parte nisi perpauci qui relinqui sunt iam corruerunt. Quia tres prefati socii, scilicet Niger Miles de Nigro Saltu et Roseus Miles de Roseo Saltu et Candidus Miles de Candido Saltu, tanta uirtute in eos debac[c]hati sunt, ut pocius leonum quam hominum illorum uideretur esse fortitudo."

Hiis auditis, a puero nuncii conciti ad Meriadocum reuertuntur eique audita referunt. Meriadocus autem, sociorum infortunium suum reputans, du[Fol. 17.]centos quos secum habebat equites duas in turmas diuisit, nilque moratus, ad locum certaminis, nunciis precedentibus, quam celer[r]ime properat. Quo ubi uentum est, *haud*[1] procul tres socios suos ab hostibus circumuallatos iamque capiendos uel interficiendos conspicit. Paucis igitur suos de pristina hortatus uirtute, aduersarios ab utroque latere uiriliter iussit inuadere. Nec mora, clamore ualido sublato et equis ad cursum concitatis, bifaria acie e silua inopini excurrunt, hostes undique *acriter*[2] inuadunt, inuasos dissipant, dissipatos partim capiunt, partim obtruncant, omnesque in fugam conuertunt captamque predam de manibus eorum *excutiunt.*[3] Aduersarii namque eos plures quam erant subsidio uenisse putauerunt, ideoque primo eorum impetu statim terga uerterunt. Fuerant autem qui capti erant ex imperialibus septingenti[4] quinquaginta equites qui, hostium fuga excussi, eos qui se ceperant statim *infestare*[5] ceperunt, et qui e bello fugientes se in siluam receperant, hostes abactos uidentes, in campum reuersi sunt. Occisorum autem ex parte imperialium habebatur numerus cccc^{ti} xxxvi. Ceteri omnes salui.

[1] MS. haut. [2] MS. accriter. [3] MS. excuciunt.
[4] *After* septingenti *the* MS. *has* dcc. [5] MS. infestari.

Fugientibus igitur aduersariis, Meriadocus a tergo cum suis truculentus insistit necemque miserandam ingerit. Omnes enim quos assequi poterant neci dabant. Cesus [Col. 2.] est igitur ab eis uniuersus regis Guntranni exercitus, ut mille penitus ex eo superessent reliquie. Ipse quoque Guntrannus fugiens a Meriadoco anticipatus occiditur. Per cuius regnum suum ilico duxit exercitum, omnia circumcirca ferro et flamma pessumdans. *Potitus*[1] est igitur uniuersis municipiis eius et urbibus, quarum quasdam ui expugnauit, quasdam in dedicionem accepit. Prebebat autem larga stipendia suis militibus de hostium spoliis. Inierat autem cum sociis consilium, se minime ad imperatorem rediturum, nisi ante miris a se gestis. Mandauit tamen imperatori bellorum euentus et queque a se gesta fuerant. Imperator uero, illum de singulari collaudans uirtute, rescripsit ei, cun[c]ta que adquisi[u]erat uel adquisiturus foret in sua, prout uellet, potestate mansura, et, si filiam suam quam rex Gundebaldus rapuerat *eripere*[2] posset, se eam sibi in matrimonio dotaturum diuiciasque et gloriam affatim collaturum. Quibus mandatis ab imperatore Meriadocus acceptis nitendum sibi summo opere indicabat, ut inceptam probitatem *meliori*[3] fine concluderet, ne sua inercia perderet quod tanti honoris sibi a tanto offerebatur principe.

Igitur per ciuitates et castella que ceperat aptis locis dispositis suorum militum presidiis, ipse priuatus, usus consilio, tantum cum tribus sociis suis, scilicet Nigro Milite de Nigro Saltu et Roseo Milite de Roseo Saltu [Fol. 17b.] et Candido Milite de Candido Saltu, in regnum Gundebaldi regis proficiscitur; regna quippe horum duorum fratrum collimitabantur, trium dierum interiecto itinere. Jam enim fama uirtutum eius usque ad aures filie imperatoris peruenerat. Ipsa quoque clanculo nuncios ad Meriadocum miserat, mandans ei, se ob probitates eius illum solum diligere . . . .[4] ipsius anunciam (*sic*) oppido appetere; et si ad eam uellet uenire [et] sua industria se e potestate Gundebaldi eripere,

[1] MS. Pocius. [2] MS. erripere. [3] MS. meiliori.

[4] *Some words apparently lost here, although there is no break in the MS.*

9

insuper et regnum ipsius ualeret adquirere. Hoc tamen ei per nuncios sepe inculcauit, ut, si ad se ueniret, cum manu priuata accederet, dicens eum potius cautela quam uiribus id negocium ad effectum posse perducere. Comparatis itaque uie necessariis, Meriadocus solummodo et tres socii eius iter ineunt. Errauerunt autem in siluam quamdam, quam transgressuri intrauerant, biduoque fame affecti sunt, quia nulla hominum habitacio in *uicino*[1] aderat, a quibus sibi necessaria emere poterant. Quinto demum die, in extrema hora nemoris, grex boum, quasi de pascuis domum reuertens, tempore uespertino ante se apparuit. Tunc Meriadocus ait Nigro Militi de Nigro Saltu: "Festinanter precede; collem qui ante nos eminet ascende; si locus sit quo diuertere hac nocte possimus inspice; hic quippe grex quem conspicimus non longius remota hominum repetunt habitacula." Niger igitur Miles de Nigro [Saltu], ut sibi iubebatur, precessit, montem ascendit, circumspexit, rediit, clamauitque ad socios: [Col. 2.] "Venite; ne moremini; urbs preclarissima muro circumdata trans montem habetur, cuius eciam suburbana firma concludunt menia." Colle itaque traiecto, hominem inuenerunt in agro, a quo que et cuius urbs esset urbisque quesierunt aditum. Responsum est ab eo urbem Gundebaldi regis et nobiliorem municioremque tocius regni ipsius esse, ob cuius decorem et firmitatem filiam imperatoris quam ceperat in eam posuisse in eamque clausam obseruare; portis autem ciuitatis sedulos continue custodes pre timore imperatoris presidere neminemque ab occasu solis usque ad ipsius ortum die sequenti urbem ingredi uel egredi permittentes; si autem urbem uoluissent intrare, gregem boum precedentem sequerentur. Intrabat autem grex in suburbana per quandam portam paruulam. Secuti sunt igitur armenta boum, atque suburbana subeuntes ad ualuas ciuitatis peruenerunt repagulis firmissime obseratas. Meriadocus autem aduocans ianitorem rogauit blande, ut sibi ianuas patefaceret. Ille uero tantum-

[1] MS. uicinio.

modo portarum aperto postico, "*Cuiates*[1]" ait "estis? *pacifici*-[2] ne an exploratores?" Cui Meriadocus: "Ex Britonibus originem ducimus; regi Britannie diu militauimus; pacifici sumus; ut regi Gundebaldo seruiamus in hanc patriam uenimus, quem ab imperatore Alemannie grauari audiuimus. Si militibus indiget et nostro seruicio, presto habemur ipsius parere imperis. Nos ergo intrare permitte." [Fol. 18.] Contra ianitor: "Laudandi quidem estis, quod ad subsidium domini mei uenistis, cui talium uirorum non parua incumbit necessitas. Verum propter fraudes imperialium sibi assidue insidiancium ab ipso *uetitum*[3] est, aliquem extraneum hanc ingredi ciuitatem, nisi ex precepto oris ipsius uel prefecti, quem ad tuendam reliquit ciuitatem. Rex quippe longius tridie infra suum regnum *profectus*[4] est, dimisitque in hac urbe filiam imperatoris, quam ui abduxit, ut ipsa eum rogauit, ob cuius *raptionem*[5] cotidie pene milites imperatoris per hanc discurrunt prouinciam et uariante fortuna plurime hinc [et] inde fiunt congressiones. Qua de re claustra urbis arcius obseruantur, ne aliqua incuria hosti poteat aditus. Vos autem ite et uobis in suburbano *hospicia*[6] capite, donec rex redierit uel cum prefecto huius urbis *locutus fuerim*."[7] Cui Meriadocus "Immo," ait "tu ad prefectum uade et renuncia illi quatuor milites ante ualuas stare urbisque precari ingressum; simul et cur aduenerimus ei insinua." Ad hec ianitor "Non faciam," *respondit*[8] "quia non mihi uacat et porte iam sunt claudende. Discedite hinc ad hospicium uestrum. Procacia uestra uos aliquas demonstrat machinari insidias." Quo dicto, cum posticum claudere uellet, Meriadocus equo prosiliens "Obsecro" ait, "amice, tria uerba mecum secrecius ad tuum profectum loquere." Janitore uero negante et posticum claudere festinante, Meriadocus, aduertens neminem cum eo infra ianuas adesse, [Col. 2.] pede dextro tam fortiter posticum impulit, ut et ipsum ianitorem postico impulsum

[1] MS. cui aces.
[2] MS. pacifice.
[3] MS. ventum.
[4] MS. prefectus.
[5] MS. repcionem.
[6] MS. hospicio.
[7] MS. locuti fuerit.
[8] MS. respondere.

solo resupinum prosterneret. Introque fremebundus irrumpens, ipsum per *tempora*[1] cor[r]eptum foras extraxit atque in rapidum flumen, quo urbs ambiebatur, proiecit. Deinde introgressus portas *aperuit*[2] et socios urbem intrare fecit.

Dum hec ab illis geruntur, fortuitu filia imperatoris in turri muris contigua ad superiores fenestrarum absides cum duabus puellis stabat, hinc uirorem pratorum, fluenta fluminum, illinc amenitatem se spaciando despectans nemorum. Que, uniuersa que ad ualuas urbis acta sunt intuita, statim cepit coniecturare ipsum esse Meriodocum qui tantum *facinoris*[3] perpetrare ausus fuisset. Verita igitur ne a ciuibus res gesta comperiretur, sine mora nuncium quem ante ad Meriadocum miserat clanculo asciuit, portas urbis adire celerrime precepit, qui essent quos pre illis stare uiderat inquisiturum. Nuncius festinauit, ualuas peciit, re inuestigata, ad dominam rediit, Meriadocum adesse nunciauit. Remittitur nuncius festinanter, Meriadocum ad castellum perducturus. Mandauit autem illi, ut diceret, mutato nomine, se regi militaturum aduenisse. Rex autem, ut predixi, remocius profectus fuerat. Prefectus quoque ad regalia exercenda negocia eadem die urbem exierat. Filia uero imperatoris, ut domina, urbi presidebat, cuius iussionibus animo libenciori quam ipsius regis omnes [Fol. 18b.] ciues obsecundabant. Meriadocus igitur, castellum ingressus, filiam imperatoris cum considentibus lepide salutauit, suumque interrogantibus nomen mentitus, regi subsidio se aduentasse cum sociis astruebat. Exceptus est autem ab illa coram aliis, ut extraneus, sed post refeccionem cene, quibusque militum sua hospicia petentibus, puella, cum sui consilii consciis remanens, eum introduxit thalamis omnibusque refocillauit deliciis. Cui, cum uniuersa que circa imperatorem et a se gesta erant narrasset, "Mecum" ait illa "O Meriadoce, hiis duobus perhendinabis diebus, tercio quo te misero proficiscens."

Moratus est igitur apud illam Meriadocus duobus diebus omnique gaudio et delectacione recreatus est. Die autem

[1] MS. timpora. [2] MS. apparuit. [3] MS. facionoris.

tercio illucescente, Meriadocum illa aduocauit, cui et hec locuta est: "Patens tibi est, Meriadoce, me a rege Gundebaldo ui captam et ui a patre, iam triennium est, abductam. Nec tamen me quasi captiuam sed *uelut*[1] filiam, immo eciam ut dominam, semper hactenus habuit. Tocius enim sui regni principatus in [m]eis subiacet iussionibus acque ad meum nutum uniuersa eius precipua pendent negocia. Ipsemet rex mee uoluntati in omnibus obsequitur, nec est quod uelit patrare quod menti mee obesse noluerit. Verum licet mihi pro uoto suppetant omnia, meam tamen mihi conscienciam semper captiuitatis remordet iniuria; vnde [Col. 2.] mihi regnum est pro carcere, diuiciarum copias inopiam reputo, honor et gloria mihi uidentur dolor et augustia, nec est aliquid quod meo sedeat animo, quamdiu tenear sub captiuitatis uinculo. Nitendum est igitur ut hinc eripiar, quia gratius est mihi eciam cum miseriis mori libera quam cum omnibus deliciis uiuere captiua. Ad quod efficiendum neminem te magis scio idoneum, quia qui tot probitatum singulari uirtute assecutus [es] insignia certa sum te meum uelle completurum, si ad hoc uolenti animo erigaris. Duo autem sunt que huic rei maxime suffragantur. Vnum autem est, quod in re militari sollers haberis et strenuus, et, ut puto, solus inuentus es, qui Gundebaldi incomparabilem conterat fortitudinem, qui in rebus bellicis nunquam sui parem inuenit. Aliud est quod ipse rex Gundebaldus ob morum peruersitatem et importabilem tirannidem uniuersis sui regni ciuibus odiosus habetur, tuaque fama audita, tuum aduentum ardentibus animis hactenus affectauerunt. Rem autem quo te docuero aggredieris ordine.

"Curiam ipsius Gundebaldi a me digressus adibis, quodque sub eius stipendiis militaturus adueneris ei intimabis. *Sed*[2] sunt quedam in quibus te premunitum esse desidero. Ipse Gundebaldus incomparabilis exstat uirtutis, cui mos huiusmodi noscitur hactenus fuisse, ut nullum sibi militare [Fol. 19.]

[1] MS. velud. [2] MS. Set.

cupientem consorcio sue admiserit milicie, antequam quarum esset uirium ipsemet singulari congressione fuerit expertus. Est autem ei quedam insula, quindecim ex omni parte patens miliariis, super Rheni fluminis ripas sita, terra de qua nemo reuertitur *nuncupata;*[1] ex cuius uocabulo ipse cognominatus est rex terre de qua nemo reuertitur. Que quidem insula iccirco terra de qua nemo reuertitur dicta cognoscitur, quod sit tota palus perpetua, omni destituta soliditate, que nec hominum nec pecudum umquam tulerit uestigia; omnis quippe illius superficies insule ad instar bituminis liquescit et *defluit*[2] mollicie, nulla firmitate subnixa, ut pocius liquidum bitumen quam solidam terram iudices. Inde est—quia quicquid illam ingreditur statim mergitur—terra de qua nemo reuertitur merito *nuncupatur.*[3] Non herbas gignit, non arbores nec aliquid quod uitalem spiret animam. Eiusdem latitudinis cuius et longitudinis est. In medio tamen ipsius, quasi in puncto centri, pene miliarium et semis terra solida est; quem locum, municioni congruum et inexpungnabilem Gundebaldus considerans, mira arte et industria uiam permeabilem per mediam paludem ad illum usque direxit. Longissimis enim trabibus centenorum pedum sibique more . . . .[4] *compleuit*[5] ex aduerso incastratis paludi spisso ordine et directo infixis; alios[6] pedes crassitudinem habentes super capita eorum contabulari fecit. Has quoque contabulaciones [Col. 2.] lapidibus strauit, ut natura pocius quam ars uiam uideatur effecisse. Secat autem insulam a quatuor partibus per medium in modo crucis porrecta, cuius partes coeunt in predictam solidam continentem in medio loco sitam, in qua ipse Gundebaldus aulam uenusti operis construxit, [h]ortum diuersarum arborum fructuumque conseruit et aquarum riuulos diriuauit. Quam aulam fere semper dum pacis fruitur ocio frequentat, ubi et omnes suos congessit thesauros. A quatuor autem lateribus quatuor castella insulam muniunt,

[1] MS. nunccupata. [2] MS. deffluit. [3] MS. nunccupatur.
[4] *Although there is no break in the* MS. *some words seem to have been omitted here.*
[5] MS. compliuit. [6] *Probably a numeral has been omitted before* pedes.

scilicet quibus locis uiarum capita ab insula exeunt. Sed predicta semita artissima est, ut obuiantes non capiat, tantum pedum . . . .[1] porrecta in latitudinem. Nam paludis profunditas et inconstancia laciorem fieri minime passa est. Gundebaldus igitur, ut premonstraui, dum ad se uenientes milites et sibi seruire cupientes probare desiderat, ipse aulam prescriptam armatus petit, militem ad quodlibet unum ex quatuor castellis statuit; deinde, admissis equis, in arta semita inuicem congrediuntur. Verum omnes qui cum eo hactenus confluxerunt ipse prostrauit atque in profundam paludem nunquam resurrecturos deiecit. Est quippe uir nulli probitate posterior, habens sonipedem generosum et precipuum, cuius solius ualore multos egregios milites ille deuicerit et prostrauerit. Certus itaque sis te cum illo oportere congredi et te ei minime posse resistere, si prefato equo uectus [Fol. 19b.] tibi occurrerit, nisi meo minuaris (*sic*) a[m]miniculo. Habeo namque apud me sonipedem quem Gundebaldus mihi commendauit, fratrem alterius sonipedis quem ipse secum detinet sed illo multo ualenciorem et *egregiorem*.[2] Preclara quoque ipsius arma penes me seruantur, que una cum pretaxato equo tibi tradam, quibus munitus ipsius occursum secure poteris recipere. Videas ergo ut te probe strenueque contineas, quia uita et salus utriusque nostrum ex hoc pendet negocio. Si tibi successerit, et mihi succedit; si quid aduersi *incurreris*,[3] et me casus idem manebit."

Hiis dictis, suffusa lacrimis dextrarium e claustris quibus tenebatur fecit produci *Arabicum*,[4] forma, pulcritudine, decore et ualore sola regia sella dignum. Erat enim capite paruo et macilento, acutis et erectis auribus, collo lato spisso et neruoso, corpore plano et producto, iliis striccioribus, pectore diffuso, crassis clunibus et rotundis, cauda protensa crispa et demissa, tibiis grossis et ualentibus, magnis pedibus, firmis ungulis, uiuaci gestu, magnarum uirium, lenis motus, cursu uelocissimus, tante mansuetudinis, ut manu pueri posset circumflecti.

[1] *A numeral is needed here.*
[2] MS. eggregiorem.
[3] MS. incurrens.
[4] MS. arrabicum.

Hunc equum falleris quibus condecebat co[m]ptum et ornatum iussit Meriadocum ascendere, supradictis regis armis ei contraditis. Mutuo igitur ualedicto, Meriadocus [Col. 2.] ad regem tendere cum sociis cepit. Quem apud unum e quatuor castellis insulam cingentibus *reperiens*,[1] ea condicione ab eo suscipitur, ut, si singularem illius congressum perferre ualuisset, numero ipsius ascriberetur milicie. Quid plura? Dies statuitur, quo inuicem congrederentur. Occultabat autem Meriadocus sonipedem usque ad diem congressionis, iuxta preceptum puelle, ne a Gundebaldo comperiretur. Numquam enim Gundebaldus cum eo certamen inisset, si illum equum Meriadocum habere cognouisset. Duelli dies aduenerat et uterque se ad certamen preparat. Rex ab aula in insula sita, Meriadocus a proximo castello armatus progreditur. Verum vbi appropinquauerunt et rex Gundebaldus suum sonipedem aduertit, confestim expaluit, omneque robur ipsius *emarcuit;*[2] in sortibus quippe acceperat se ab illo solo uincendum qui sibi singulari pungna illo equo uectus occurrisset. Non tamen erat tunc tempus penitendi nec locus periculum euitandi, quia, ut alter libere transiret, alter deici ante erat necesse. Tota igitur res solis consistebat uiribus. Hec tamen horrenda uoce intonuit, se ab illis proditum in quibus maxime confidebat, subiu[n]xitque: "Meriadoce, Meriadoce, nunc primum quis sis agnosco. Tua cum puella amicicia supplantauit me." Meriadocus autem eius dicta non attendens, a[d]misso equo, demissa lancea, eum uiriliter impulit, atque cum equo [Fol. 20.] in unum globum, uersis uestigiis, in paludem deiecit. Absor[p]tique sunt ambo, scilicet rex cum sonipede, in profundo bituminis nec unquam postea uisi sunt.

Rege igitur Gundebaldo in palude submerso, quia propter uie artitudinem equum Meriadocus circumflectere minime poterat, usque ad aulam progressus est. Ex cuius aduentu milites, custodes palacii, regis interitum cognoscentes, sine mora in *ultionem*[3] in eum unanimes irruissent, ni pacta

[1] MS. repperiens. [2] MS. emartuit. [3] MS. ultorem dum.

condicio et lex statuta uetuissent. Sanctitum namque inter regem et Meriadocum iureiurando, suo uniuerso audiente exercitu, fuerat, ut, si, illo deuicto, Meriadocus uictor *existeret*,[1] ob ipsius necem nil prorsus mali a suorum quoquam pateretur, et, quia herede carebat, suo quoque libere potiretur imperio; tot quippe autem secum confligentes prostrauerat, ut nec Meriadocum[2] ipsum quidem sibi posse resistere certus extiterit; ideoque pactum huiusmodi quasi pro ridiculo cum eo inierit. Sed longe aliter quam sperabatur contigit. Aulici igitur, cum condicione sanctita constricti, tum eius probitatem admirati, non solum ei nocere cauerunt, uerum eciam cum ingenti ipsum laude susceperunt, ut dominum *acclamantes*[3] illum dignum imperio, qui uirum contriuerit, cuius impetum neminem umquam ferre potuisse constabat. Arma itaque thesaurosque ei contradunt. Mittit confestim pro sociis ad castellum de quo ad bellum egressus est. Nunciatur quoque [Col. 2.] res gesta per reliqua oppida confinia. Conueniunt ad Meriadocum principes; coadunantur militum cohortes; in regni gubernatorem ab omnibus assumitur, summaque rerum potestas ei conceditur. Deditur illi uniuersa prouincia; tocius regni cessit potencia. Meriadocus autem, eorum liberalitati et munificencie debitas gracias referens condignisque muneribus singulos remunerans, illis in commune insinuat, quod miles sit imperatoris; quod ab eo ad subiugandos hostes directus [sit]; quod hiis rebus maxime suam operam adhibuerit, ut filiam imperatoris a captiuitate excuteret; quod quicquid illis in regionibus adquisisset uiribus et nomini imperatoris ascriberet; quod imperator sibi filiam se in matrimonio daturum, si eam e Gundebaldi posset manibus eripere, spoponderit; propter que omnia oportere se consensu, consilio et ordinacione imperatoris agere, que agenda erant super regnorum que assecutus fuerat regimine. Ad hec principes ex communi responderunt consultu, se nichil

[1] MS. exissteret.
[2] *In the* MS. Meriadocum *by mistake is put after* autem *in this sentence.*
[3] MS. acclammantes.

imperatori debere; se nichil ex ipso tenere; se nunquam sub eius dicione fuisse; se nec timore nec uiribus imperatoris sibi cessisse. Si traditum a se principatum in antiqua libertate uellet tueri, gratum illius sibi foret dominium; si sub imperatoris deliberaret transferre imperium, iret quo uellet, ut uenerat; ipsi sibi alium regem preficerent. Dum hoc inter eos diu uentilatum fuisset, tandem in hac se[n]tencia [Fol. 20b.] consenserunt principes, ut, si imperator ei suam filiam in coniugium traderet, regnum suum imperatoris dicioni subigi non refutarent; sin autem, id nullo modo fieri paterentur. Tali fine conuentus soluitur. Meriadocus autem, munitis undecumque urbibus et castellis, ad puellam rediit, a qua cum magna triumphali pompa *magnisque*[1] occurrencium est exceptus preconiis.

Dum autem Meriadocus in hiis esset occupatus negociis, ingens bellum inter imperatorem et regem Gallie exoritur, quo imperatorem ualde comprimi et coartari contigit. Rex quippe Gallie ex inprouiso super eum ducens exercitum, longe lateque eius depeculiatus prouincias, quasdam quoque preclaras urbes et municipia expugnauit, ciues captiuauit, reliqua omnia ferro et flamma pessumdans. Tres eciam ipsius duces cum maxima multitudine sibi occurrentes prostrauit omnemque eorum usque ad internicionem fudit exercitum. Imminente igitur sibi rege et assidua infestacione incumbente, compulsus est imperator cum eo pacem firmare [et] tali condicione inire concordiam, ut filiam suam quam Gundebaldo Meriadocus eripuerat maritali lege coniungeret, concessis ei omnibus que de suo imperio armis optinuerat. Jam quippe ei Meriadocus uniuersa a se gesta scripto innotuerat. Cauit autem diligentissime imperator, ne quod [Col. 2.] cum rege Gallie super filie sue desponsacione conuenerat ullo modo Meriadoco patefieret; unde et ad huius rei noticiam non nisi consiliarios suos quemquam admiserat. Nouerat enim probitatem Meriadoci et quantum in re militari ualeret quantumque iam sibi ex duobus regnis que adqui-

[1] MS. mangnisque.

si[u]erat robur accreuisset. Studuit itaque eum fraude circumuenire, qua filiam suam de manibus eius auferre ipsumque sui potestati posset subigere.

Hec imperator apud se et cum amicis deliberans duos nobilissimos proceres, xl suo in commitatu milites habentes, ad Meriadocum cum suis signatis direxit apicibus, quibus primum Meriadocum laude afferebat multiplici, illum patronum et tutorem sui sepe clamitans imperii. Deinde dignas laboribus ipsius remuneraciones promittebat; quedam quoque de *propriis*[1] negociis que circa se uersabantur interserabat. Ad ultimum uero mandabat et precipiebat illum sine dilacione ad se properare, suam filiam cum principibus utriusque regni abducere, tum quia eam uisendi immo detinebatur affectu, tum quod nupcias eiusdem peragere festinaret, quas se absente perfici nolebat, tum [quod] eciam principes quos conuenire iubebat sibi dedicionem facerent. Meriadocus autem, huiusmodi ab imperatore mandata suscipiens, magnum sue glorie ex dictis ipsius repu[Fol. 21.]tabat emolumentum accidisse, non perpendens hamum cibo tectum, uenenum melle dulcoratum, uerba captancia decepcionis blandiciis illita extitisse. Nec mora, procerum coegit concilium, in quorum audiencia mandata imperatoris recitari iussit. Quibus auditis, confestim fauor cunctorum eum assecutus est, illum dignum *acclamancium*[2] regni gubernacione qui tot et tanta a tanto principe percipere meruisset laudum preconia. Promiseruntque secum illo una ituros eique in omnibus que imperasset obsecundaturos et quicumque casus manerent socios fore atque participes.

Cum maximo igitur decore atque nobilitate profeccione parata, Meriadocus, assumpta filia imperatoris, iter propositum arrip[u]it. *Comitabantur*[3] autem eum xii comites ingenuitate et diuiciis *conspicui*[4] procerumque multitudo usque ad lxxxiiii quos non minus xx milia militum sequebantur. Nam cum tanta militum copiositate aduenit,

[1] MS. propriis. [2] MS. acclammancium. [3] MS. commitabantur.
[4] MS. conspicium.

ut eciam imperatori terribilis uideretur. Aduentanti autem imperator quasi gratulabundus occurrit, aliud uultu pretendens quam quod mente machinabatur. Jussit autem omnem turbam que cum eo uenerat, exceptis primoribus, circumcirca per uillulas et castella hospitari, uolens, si quid accidisset, omne robur exercitus ab eo remocius consistere, quatinus eorum presencia ei minime foret presidio. Primores autem et principes cum Meriadoco [Col. 2.] in suo excepit palacio. Aggregauerat autem et imperator innumerabilem miliciam, ita ut uix urbis qua morabantur menia ipsam capere[n]t. Nata[m] uero suam statim, ubi aduenit, a consorcio Meriadoci remouens, in celsiori turre constituit, adhibita ei diligenciori custodia. Ne tamen dolus pateret, aditus ad eam Meriadoco minime negabatur; sed quid inter eos gereretur suis sedulo rimari iussit, occasionem aduersus eum querens qua iuste uideretur eum grauare debere.

Nunciatur imperatori interea ab insidiantibus, Meriadocum cum filia sua sepius secreta uerba conserere, oscula inmoderacius imprimere et striccioribus stringere colla complexibus. Quod imperator audiens ad suam exercendam nequiciam se uiam *reperisse*[1] congratulatus [est] ualde. Conuocat igitur omnes principes qui ad curiam conuenerant una cum Meriadoco et suis proceribus, induxitque palacio, quasi cum eis super aliquo consultaturus negocio. *Uniuersam*[2] autem reliquam turbam clausis iussit amoueri foribus. Occuluerat autem et infra palacium et extra in pomerium quo ab aquilonari parte ambiebatur palacium ualidam manum armatorum usque ad mille quingentos milites, quibus signum dederat, quid quando agere proposuerat. Facto igitur concessu nobilium et silencio imperato, "Non uos," ait imperator "O patres et principes, latere existimo, quo affectu meos fami[Fol. 21b.]liares semper coluerim uel quibus honoribus mihi fideles extulerim quantisue sub me militantes sim solitus remunerari stipendiis. Cum amicis mihi namque est secretorum *comunicacio*,[3] cum de me iam bene meritis regni

[1] MS. repperisse. [2] MS. Uniuersum. [3] MS. communicacio.

tuicio, cum mihi militantibus thesaurorum particio. Illis diligentem, istis liberalem, reliquiis aut[em] ex[h]ibere munificum me semper studui. Hinc amicorum constanciam, procerum fidelitatem, militum uero singularem circa me comparaui uirtutem. Argumentum mee oracioni hic qui adest Meriadocus existit, quem quam fauorabiliter ad me aduentantem exceperim, ad quante dignitatis gradus sullimauerim satis habetur compertum. Primum namque ex stipendario in numero meorum famularium eum asciui; deinde gregariis uniuersis et stipendariis militibus meis prefeci; auricularem et consiliarium meum constitui; preclaras illi quoque prouincias ad regendum tradidi; hiisque satis maiora ei conferre proposui, tum ob illius uirtutem, tum quod id mee glorie rebar comparere. Quidem *strenuum*[1] eum fateor militisque pro me sudasse laboribus. Verumptamen queso cuius tociens triumphauit uiribus? Nonne meis? Nonne corrobore mei exercitus uictor exstitit? Cuius est suffultus diuiciis? Nonne suis ex meo erario stipendia prebebantur militibus? Duo quidem regna subegit. Sed quomodo? Decertante meo exercitu. Natam quoque meam de manibus Gundebaldi excussit. Sed per quid? Per industriam [Col. 2.] mee ipsius filie. Nichil ergo absque meo egit amminiculo. Vt tamen meam in eo liberalitatem et munificenciam ostenderem, super omnem quem ei ante honorem contuli, deliberaui meam copulare filiam, augere diuicias insuper et terciam partem mei imperii eius subdere dominio. Idque exequi iam festinassem, nisi scelus ipsius interuenisset quod me a meo diuertit proposito. Tanto namque ipse Meriadocus in me excessit facinore, ut non solum *promissis*[2] destitui beneficiis, uerum eciam sit dignus dirissimis subigi suppliciis. Meo quippe dedecori dedit operam nilque pudibundius quam quod gessit inferre potuit. Pudet me meimet ipsius proferre uerecundiam. Nisi tamen proferatur a uobis, sciri non potest filiam meam quam me

[1] MS. strennuum. [2] MS. promissus.

more regio desponsaturum nouerat, me insciente, oppressit, uiolauit, et, ut puto, sicut uenter tumescens innuit, grauidam *reliquit.*[1] Meam munificenciam sua preuenit nequicia, illamque sibi prostituit que sibi illibata desponsari debuit. Apud nos igitur meam depono querelam, expectaturus quid uestra super hoc censura, equitate dictante, censeat."

Ad hoc Meriadocus, ultra quam credi potest miratus et ob inauditam prodicionem que sibi intentabatur ira feruescens, dum in medium prosilisset, ut ab illatis se excusaret calumpniis, confestim qui in latebris erant, accepto signo, hinc et inde eruperunt armati. Meriadocum cum sociis, strictis gladiis, circum[Fol. 22.]dederunt, circumdatos ut inermes ceperunt, captosque abducentes in *arcem*[2] fortissimam que confinis erat palacio sub arta incluserunt custodia. Eadem quoque tempestate destinauit imperator quatuor legiones per circumiacentes uillulas ad Meriadoci occupandum exercitum, dato precepto, ut Meriadoco fauentes ergastulis manciparent, qui autem niterentur resistere gladiis cederentur. Ex quibus plurimi, prodicione comperta, fugam inierunt, quidam uiriliter pungnantes interfecti sunt, reliqua multitudo usque ad xiii m[ilia] sese imperatori dederunt; sparsim quippe per uillas hospitati fuerant, unde leuiter ab imperialibus, ut incauti et dispersi, occupati sunt. Imperatoris autem filia ubi qua fraude sit circumuentus Meriadocus audiuit, tam ingenti est absor[p]ta *merore,*[3] ut uix a propriis manibus abstineret, quin semet ipsam interficeret. Continuit tamen mentis ardorem, certa de futuris existens, quod Meriadocus, si posset euadere, uicem suis proditoribus recompensaret.

Uicesimo autem die quo hec gesta sunt rex Gallie cum magna nobilitate aduenit, sibi pactam filiam imperatoris in uxorem ducturus. Verum ubi ad puelle uentum est colloquium, remque secrecius et diligencius inuestigans, eam grauidam rex deprehendisset, ilico, quasi in iniuriam suam factum fuisset, ipsius repudiauit connubium, se scortum in

[1] MS. reliquid. [2] MS. artem. [3] MS. merrore.

coniugium abiurans umquam duc[Col. 2.]turum. Federa quoque que cum imperatore inierat sine dilacione abrupit, id in suum dedecus machinatum fuisse sepius inculcans. Nil tamen que ei iure belli abstulerat penitus restituere uoluit, sed, fracta pacis condicione bellique renouato tumultu, passim imperatoris depredabatur prouincias. E contra imperator, ubi de pace sibi spes excidit, *congregat*[1] et ipse non paruas tam pedestrium, quam equestrium copias, furentique regi maturat occurrere. Certus ab utrisque dies certaminis indicitur, quo quis eorum adeptus fuisset uictoriam alterius potiretur imperio.

Meriadocus interea [in] *prefato*[2] turri tenebatur inclusus. Verum propter bellorum euentus laxiori seruabatur custodia. Imperator enim facti penitens a uinculis immunem eum esse preceperat, sperans animum eius se aliquo modo posse lenire. Dolebat enim grauiter, quod prodicionis pro eo arguebatur crimine, uirum quod sibi utilem perdidisset, regemque nichilominus sibi hostem existere. Postquam autem Meriadocus bellum parari cognouit, qualiter euadere posset apud se sedule deliberabat. Segregatus namque a sociis per se solus manebat. Quid[d]am autem insolitum machinatus est, sicut mens hominis, ubi magis artatur, magis artificiosa sepius inuenitur. Quodam igitur ues[Fol. 22b.]pertino tempore omnes pannos quos habebat, exceptis lineis, in frusta concidit, ipsasque scissuras ad instar funiculi ad inuicem connexuit, funemque longissimum ex conscissa ueste contexuit. Quem eciam trabe ligatum per quandam humiliorem fenestram deorsum deposuit, per quem ipse ad terram confestim descendit. Deinde, ut specie canis excubias falleret, usque ad uallum manibus pedibusque repebat. Quo sine aliquo impedimento transito, ad domum cuiusdam militis, qui in uicino degebat sibique erat familiarissimus, citissime tendebat. A quo quidem ubi quis esset agnitus honorificentiss[im]e susceptus est et omnibus refocillatus deliciis. Tribus autem diebus cum eo perhendinauit. Quarto uero locum certaminis

[1] MS. coggregat. [2] MS. prefati.

peciit una cum suo hospite, qui eciam adinuenit sibi in armis et equis queque erant necessaria.

Pugne dies illuxerat, et a suis ducibus armis septus uterque in campum decertaturus producitur exercitus. Meriadocus in prima fronte se regalibus latenter ingessit cohortibus. Nulla mora, distinctis et ordinatis aciebus, discurrunt pedites; congrediuntur equites; clamor ad sidera tollitur; cominus eminusque pungnatur; corruunt passim uulnerati; nunc hac, nunc illac, uicti uictoresque pellunt et propelluntur. At Meriadocus, inter primos se semper agens, principem milicie imperatoris obuium habuit. [Col. 2.] Cum quo congressus seminecem medio campo prostrauit ac eius equum abduxit. Post hunc cuidam duci qui primam conducebat aciem occurrit. Huic quoque sub cauo pectore ferrum recondit mortiferum, abducensque sonipedem illum in suo sanguine uolutantem *reliquit.*[1] Tercium imperatoris nepotem, qui post eum imperaturus credebatur, furibundus excepit; nec meliori homine . . . .[2] istum quippe cum equo in una deiectum congerie nece mulctauit tristesque manes ad Tartara misit. Deinde orbiculatim inter utrasque perequitans acies, quasi imperialibus insultaret, splendidam in eos lanceam uibrabat atque ad suum lacessibat congressum. Imperator autem, ex interitu suorum optimatum et familiarium tanto accepto infortunio, animo nimis torquebatur, atque, ubi in eo uindicaretur, mori mallet quam uiuere. Ignorabat tamen quis esset. Cumque illius congressum nullum suorum amplius conspiceret audere excipere "Occumbam" exclamauit "cum ceteris, nisi hos qui occubuerunt ulciscar." Equum igitur calcaribus subducens ad cursum coegit Meriadocumque prefixa cuspide omni uirtute peciit. E contra Meriadocus totis habenis in imperatorem admisit sonipedem atque in eum preceps irruit. Eoque imperatorem aggressus est impetu, ut nec clipeus obstiterit nec lorica, quin ualida impacta dextra lancea ei penetralia transuerberaret et cum [Fol. 23.] calido sanguine spiritum per auras eliceret.

[1] MS. reliquid.

[2] *Something seems to have been omitted here.*

Dum autem corrueret "Qualia" *inquit*[1] Meriadocus "mihi, O imperator, prebuisti stipendia, talia et ego tibi impendo seruicia." Hec dicens, se continuo cateruis armatorum immiscuit, ne cui comperiretur quis esset euadere cupiens. Rex autem quecumque gesserat sedulo conte[m]platus lumine mittit statim post eum qui illum ad se cum honore deducerent, ne tam probus miles suam euaderet noticiam, et quia ipsius gestiebat remunerari uirtutem qua de tam ualido hoste triumphauerat. Cumque ante se ductus fuisset Meriadocumque cognouisset, cuius probitas sibi satis relata fuerat, rex subridens "Meriadoce, Meriadoce," ait "e merito in illum talia exercuisti quem tante perfidie constat uite co[m]misisse facinus. Laborasti pro me, nec ero tibi ingratus, sicut ille exstitit. Ille tibi uxorem mei causa abstulit. Ego uero illam restituam."

Neci igitur imperatore tradito, ipsius totus dispergitur exercitus. Verum non multum post regis Gallie dicioni cum vniuerso imperio subditur. Rex autem, imperii potitus gubernaculo, Meriadoco confestim suam coniugem cum omnibus que ipse Meriadocus conquisi[u]erat restituit; insuper et magnas possessiones ei adiecit; suos proceres in custodia *detentos*[2] ei reddidit eumque secundum a se super totum suum imperium constituit. Nascitur post hec Meriadoco filius, ex quo multi reges et principes processerunt. Meriadocus uero in omni probitate consenuit.

VI.

Abstract of the Story.

[p. 340.] [3] In the time of Uther Pendragon, father of Arthur, a king named Caradoc ruled over Wales, whilst his brother Griffith governed a province under him. The seat of Caradoc's power was in the neighborhood of Snowdon. He

[1] MS. inquid. [2] MS. decentos.

[3] These bracketed numbers refer to the corresponding pages of the Latin text.

conquered Ireland and married the daughter of the king of that land, and a son and a daughter were the fruit of this union. Feeling sometime afterwards, however, the approach of old age, Caradoc decided to turn over the administration of his kingdom to his brother Griffith and to devote himself to hunting and other amusements. Griffith at first governs the land wisely, [p. 341.] but evil men persuade him to render his power permanent by slaying his brother and seizing upon the throne. [p. 342.] They plan to carry out the assassination whilst the king is hunting in a forest. Caradoc has a dream that he is pierced with arrows by two men who received them from the hand of Griffith. Notwithstanding the fright which the dream causes him and the attempt of the queen to dissuade him from carrying out his intention, [p. 343.] Caradoc goes forth to the hunt. Owing to his age he falls behind the others and is slain under circumstances similar to those of which he had been warned in the dream.

The news is spread abroad and the queen expires from grief. [p. 344.] Griffith also feigns grief but he makes haste to lay hands on the crown. Moreover, he not only refuses their reward to the assassins of Caradoc, but in order to turn suspicion from himself he commands his men first to cut out the tongues of the assassins and then to put them to death. But the accusation which, [p. 345.] before dying, they had launched against Griffith had been heard and was generally believed. The nobles who had been adherents of Caradoc, fearing what Griffith might do against them in future, determined to take away the children of Caradoc from his wicked brother and to seek an alliance for the girl with the son of Moroveus, duke of Cornwall. When two of their number, Sadoc and Donwald, approach him on this subject, [p. 346.] Griffith delays his reply but despatches a message to Ivor, the royal huntsman, and Morwen, his wife, who were bringing up the children, and orders them to send the children to him. Ivor, unsuspecting, obeys his command. Griffith decides to slay the children, but being, in a measure,

touched by their appeals [p. 347.] he sends them off to the forest of Arglud with directions that they should be hanged there. The appointed executioners, however, feel compassion for the children and on reaching the forest tie them to the branch of a huge oak with a slender rope, easily broken, so that they might fall to the ground unharmed. Ivor hears of the flight of the children and taking along with him his horn and his dog Dolfin, *quem multum diligebat,* together with his sword and arms he sets out for the forest, accompanied by his wife and determined to rescue the children or to die in the attempt. Recognizing his inability to accomplish anything against so many by force, he resorts to a stratagem. [p. 348.] To frighten off the men who have charge of the children he kindles fires in the four quarters of the forest and throws flesh into these fires with the purpose of attracting wolves from every side by the odor. He then hides himself in a tree nearby with his wife and dog and waits there to see what will happen. His expectation is answered by the result. The wolves gather and the men conceal themselves in the hollow of the tree to which the children had been hanged. Ivor wounds four of the wolves with his arrows and the remainder of the pack attack their wounded comrades, thereby increasing the fright of the men in the hollow tree. Ivor next blows his horn and scares away the wolves. He then descends from the tree and begins to smoke out the men in their hollow. [p. 349.] To gain permission to come out, they promise to let the children go away with him free. Ivor assents, but as the men crawl out of the hollow one by one, he slays them all in succession. He then delivers the children, who had been suspended for half a day, and flies with them, his wife and his dog to the Fleventanean forest, where he takes refuge in Eagle Rock—so-called because on it were built the nests of four eagles who constantly faced the four points of the compass. There were wrought in the rock ample rooms and the whole was concealed by the dense

woods round about. They lived there by hunting, [p. 350.] fowling and the nuts which they gathered. The author then describes how they struck fire from flint and were able to cook their food without the usual utensils. [p. 351.] After they had lived five years in this manner, they were walking one day in the forest, Morwen and the girl being somewhat separated from the rest when Urien, King of Scotland, accompanied by Kay passed along on his way home from a visit to Arthur. Urien and Kay had just taken leave of one another when the former observed Morwen's charge, raised her up on his horse and carried her away to Scotland. Similarly Kay, meeting with Ivor and Meriadoc, to the great distress of Ivor, laid hands on the boy and bore him off likewise. At the end of two years Ivor and his wife determined [p. 352.] to leave the forest and go in search of the children. They guess the whereabouts of Orwen from words which Kay had let fall in parting with Urien. Moreover, Ivor recognized Kay from having once served as a huntsman at Arthur's court. They separate, then, Morwen going to Scotland in search of the girl and Ivor to Arthur's court with the hope of recovering Meriadoc.

It happened that Morwen arrived in Scotland on the very day appointed for the marriage of King Urien and Orwen. On their return from the church after the marriage ceremony, the queen, whilst dealing out alms to the poor people by the wayside, recognizes her foster-mother in the throng. Orwen faints at the sight of her, but when she revives tells Urien [p. 353.] the cause of her swoon. Morwen is then brought to the palace and entertained in the handsomest manner.

In the meanwhile Ivor has sought King Arthur's court. Bearing a dead stag on his shoulders, he enters the hall whilst they are all at the feast. He recognizes Kay and offers him the stag. Meriadoc in turn recognizes his foster-father at once and springs clear over the table to greet him. At Meriadoc's request [p. 354.] Ivor is received among the attendants of Kay.

Shortly after this Kay pays a visit to King Urien in Scotland and takes Ivor and Meriadoc with him. There they meet Morwen and Orwen, and mutual recognitions take place with great delight.

After a time they all plan to take vengeance on Griffith for his crime, but first seek the consent of Arthur, [p. 355.] recalling to his memory the virtues of Caradoc. Arthur summons Griffith to appear at his court on an appointed day to make amends for the murder of his brother. But Griffith, who has learned in the meanwhile of the escape of his brother's children, determined not to obey the summons. On the contrary, he determined to resist King Arthur and fortifies various places—especially Mount Snowdon, upon which Arthur and Urien now advanced with their forces.

Griffith cut off all the approaches to Wales save one which was very narrow and could be easily guarded. To dislodge the enemy, Sadoc and Donwald on the side of Arthur ravaged Griffith's provinces to such an extent that the latter [p. 356.] was compelled to leave his stronghold and oppose them. Arthur then pursues Griffith and besieges him in a town situated on a high rock. Nevertheless, all the efforts of Arthur to reduce the place were vain for the space of three years, when at last it succumbed to famine. [p. 357.] In accordance with the judgment of the nobles Griffith was executed, after which event the kingdom of Wales passed into the hands of Meriadoc.

But Meriadoc was unwilling to remain at home in the idleness of peace and he accordingly arranged with his brother-in-law,[1] Urien, that the latter should take charge of the kingdom whilst he sought warlike adventures abroad—on the condition, however, that he might resume his sovereignty whenever it pleased him. Nevertheless, for a time, Meriadoc stayed on at Arthur's court before going into foreign lands and whilst he was there the Black Knight

[1] The MS. strangely has *socer* in two places, viz., pp. 357, 366.

of the Black Woodland came to court to assert his right to the Black Woodland against King Arthur. [p. 358.] The latter laid claim to the Woodland on the ground that the herd of swine which frequented it had sprung from a black boar and sow placed there by Uther Pendragon. The Black Knight, on the other hand, averred that the darkness of his complexion which was due to the Black Woodland sufficiently established his claim. The Black Knight declines the arbitration of Arthur's nobles and proposes to submit the question to the decision of arms. He offers to combat forty knights on forty successive days [p. 359.] and the king accepts his terms. In due time the agreement is carried out, but on thirty-seven successive days the Black Knight overcomes the champions opposed to him. Arthur in alarm arranges to send Kay forth [p. 360.] as the champion the next day, and Gawain on the day following that, if Kay should prove unsuccessful. But Meriadoc who had been knighted by Kay hears of this arrangement and begs Kay to be allowed to take his place. [p. 361.] Kay consents and Meriadoc sets out for the Black Woodland. A deep and broad river ran by the place, marking, as it were, the limits of Arthur's kingdom. Meriadoc on reaching this river turned his horse loose to rest and refresh himself in the grass. He next prepared himself for the encounter and mounting his steed advanced to the ford and sounded his trumpet. The Black Knight duly rushes forth but is overcome by Meriadoc. [p. 362.] He expresses his admiration for Meriadoc's strength and makes inquiry concerning his ancestry and history. He then surrenders and proposes that Meriadoc should accept him as his constant comrade in all future enterprises. [p. 363.] To this Meriadoc agrees and they set out for Arthur's court.

During the forty days that the combats with the Black Knight lasted King Arthur refused every day to take food until he had heard the result of the combat. On this day in his anxiety on account of the delay he sends a man up to the top of a tower to be on the watch for Meriadoc's return.

After a time the watchman announces that the hero is approaching together with the Black Knight. The king is incredulous, but soon they arrive and Meriadoc reports his victory and claims the redemption of the promise which the king had made—viz., that he would grant him any request that he might proffer, in case he proved victorious in this contest. The king invites him to state his petition and Meriadoc asks [p. 364.] that the possession of the Black Woodland be restored to the Black Knight. The king is reluctant thus to relinquish the object of the contest, but on the advice of his nobles he finally yields.

[p. 365.] On the following day the Red Knight of the Red Woodland presents himself with the complaint that the king has robbed him of his ancestral estate. Meriadoc is again sent forth as champion of the king and having overcome this new adversary makes the same terms with him as with the Black Knight and restores the property to its owner.

The same thing is repeated with the White Knight of the White Woodland, so that Meriadoc in these three combats has gained three devoted followers.

[p. 366.] Meriadoc now determines to entrust the kingdom of Wales to his brother-in-law, Urien, on the terms which have already been stated, and to carry out his plan of seeking warlike adventures. He learns of a war going on between the Emperor of Germany and Gundebald, king of the land from which no one returns, for the latter had seized and carried off the only daughter of the emperor and refused on any terms to give her up again. Meriadoc with his companions goes to the wars and so distinguishes himself that he is soon put at the head of the imperial forces. [p. 367.] One day the news is brought that Saguncius has invaded the land and is ravaging it. The emperor orders Meriadoc to go forth and oppose him. Meriadoc divides his forces into four bands, retaining one with himself and entrusting the others respectively to his three companions. The invaded land is bounded by a river which can only be forded at one point.

Whilst the enemy are plundering the emperor's country, Meriadoc sends the Black Knight with his force across the river so as to be in a position to intercept the invaders on their return. The White Knight he orders to recover their booty from the enemy whilst he himself engages them. Lastly he puts the Red Knight and his band in ambush, to render him aid whenever the opportunity should offer. Meriadoc then assails the army of Sanguncius laden with booty. [p. 368.] Notwithstanding the prodigies of valor which he performs, the issue is doubtful until the Red Knight throws his force on the enemy's flank and routs them. The fugitives endeavor to cross the river, the horsemen placing themselves in a double line in the middle of the stream with an interval between them in order to break its force for the rest. But recent rains had so swollen the current that this manœuvre did not succeed. The first that entered the stream were drowned in great numbers, [p. 369.] but this enabled the rest to get across [on their dead bodies, apparently]. Nevertheless the Black Knight and his men fell upon them here and they were likewise attacked from behind by Meriadoc. Saguncius decides to look out for his own safety and escapes with a few men to an ancient forest, whither Meriadoc follows him in pursuit. In the meanwhile the Black and Red Knights completed the destruction of the invading army and rejoined the White Knight who had charge of the booty on the other side of the river.

With two hundred men Meriadoc continues to pursue Saguncius through the forest mentioned above, but the latter makes good his escape. Now this forest, in which the pursuers find themselves involved, was of vast and unknown extent, for it was haunted by wild beasts and by innumerable phantasms that vexed wayfarers and led them astray, so that no one had ever dared to explore it. [p. 370.] Meriadoc and his men marched forward into the wood a whole summer's day, but when evening comes, they descend from their horses and let them loose to graze in a woodland pasture. Guards are

set with the instruction to wake them at dawn and the rest go to sleep. Hardly had they closed their eyes when, much to Meriadoc's astonishment, the guards warn them to arise, for day is breaking. They began the march again, but had not proceeded more than a mile and a half when it seemed already past prime. About this time they came to a plain where Meriadoc had hunted with the emperor. But suddenly there appeared beautiful buildings of immense size surrounded by a wall and a moat. Meriadoc expresses to his followers his astonishment at seeing these marble dwellings on ground which he had hunted over not three weeks before and summons them to go forward and discover who are the possessors of these marvellous structures. [p. 371.] Before the gates of the palace they are met by about thirty beautiful boys, clad in purple, who salute them courteously and invite them to a meal. It seemed to be already about the third hour of the day, but Meriadoc, although anxious to hasten on his journey, consents to go in, mainly to satisfy his curiosity concerning this strange adventure. They enter the court, which they find filled with people, and ascend by steps of porphyry to a room in the upper part of the house, where they find a beautiful woman lying on a couch and looking on at the nobles and knights who were playing chess and various games of chance about the room. When she perceived Meriadoc, she saluted him and called him to her. She addresses him by his name and welcomes him, saying that she had long heard of his deeds of prowess. Meriadoc expresses his surprise that she should know his name—also that he should find these marvellous structures where so recently [p. 372.] none had been. She rejoins that he has been long known to her both by name and person—moreover, that the buildings which excite his wonder have been there from the earliest times and that he is mistaken in believing that he had ever been in this spot before. Meriadoc and his men are then invited to sit down at a splendid banquet, the former being honored with a seat next to the mistress of the house, at a higher table apart from

the rest. But it is a peculiarity of this feast that no one of the company—either guests or servants—ever speaks a word. Whilst the lady of the house is looking elsewhere, Meriadoc calls the steward to him and asks who his mistress is, her name, whether she is married and the meaning of this silence, but the steward, instead of replying, only turns up his nose and makes a gesture of contempt. When the question is repeated, he hangs out his tongue down to his chin, like a panting dog, and gives no answer save a laugh of derision. Meriadoc remonstrates with him and asks the question a third time. [p. 373.] The steward, still silent, puts his hands to his temples and wags his fingers like the ears of an ass. At the same time his eyes become filled with flame, his mouth gapes open and he rushes upon Meriadoc as if to devour him, looking more like a demon than a man. Notwithstanding the rebuke which the steward's action calls forth from the lady of the house, Meriadoc and his men are so frightened by this experience that they leave the feast and hasten to their horses. These are likewise stricken with terror and all that night they bear their masters hither and thither in wild confusion through the forest, bringing them constantly into collision, as though in battle. In this way many of the men are thrown, some are borne entirely away from their companions, whilst Meriadoc and the rest find themselves in the morning plunged in a river up to their saddle-bows. When they emerge from the river, [p. 374.] Meriadoc has to lament the loss of fifty-four of his men.

In attempting to find their way out of the forest they only penetrate deeper and deeper into it, and a great storm of thunder and lightning which comes up adds to their wretchedness. Meriadoc inquires whether any one knows of a place in the forest where they may seek shelter and learns from one of his knights of a great castle nearby, from which no visitor, however, had ever returned without shame. Nevertheless Waldomer, a relative of the emperor, who had followed Meriadoc to the war, insisted on making trial of this castle

[p. 375.] and he is accompanied by all but eleven of the men. The knight who guides the party to the castle returns to Meriadoc, but Waldomer and the rest go in and find a handsomely furnished hall up in a tower with a blazing fire in it—also stables, with abundance of forage, attached to the castle. They provide for their horses, lay aside their arms and seat themselves about the fire, but soon an inexplicable terror descends upon them, so that they all sit in silence and do not dare to look at one another. In the meanwhile the men who had remained with Meriadoc become impatient on account of the storm and desire also to be led to the castle. The knight who knows the way leads them thither, but returns to Meriadoc, who had been left alone. The spirits of those who first entered the castle are somewhat relieved by the arrival of their companions, but they are soon all afflicted with the same fear. [p. 376.] Finally Meriadoc wishes to join his men and is led to the castle by the guide, who steadily refuses, however, to enter himself.

When Meriadoc comes upon his companions seated in the hall, as described above, he is surprised that they do not salute him and asks the reason. Waldomer explains that they are all possessed with terror. Meriadoc bids them get up and prepare a table, whilst he goes to seek for food. He passes through two rooms, but, finding nothing, enters a third and discovers there a beautiful girl sitting on a couch with a table abundantly supplied with food and drink set before her. He snatches up both bread and wine and hurries off, but in the second room encounters a man of huge stature, from whom he receives a blow that nearly prostrates him, causing his sword to fly from his hand. Meriadoc, nevertheless, keeps on his way and sets down the food and drink before his men. He does not tell them what has happened to him—and though determined to take vengeance on his assailant only says that [p. 377.] he is going to the kitchen. He rests first, however, and whilst he is sitting there depressed, a man appears, bringing Meriadoc his sword and delivering a

message from the girl, in which he is accused of rudeness and cowardice for his recent behavior. Meriadoc takes the sword, goes to the kitchen and fills a dish with the best food he can discover. He finds there sleeping by the fire a man of great stature, beardless and with shaven head, who is awakened by Meriadoc. This man attacks Meriadoc with a spit, which, however, breaks in his hands. On the other hand, Meriadoc seizes him by the ears, casts him into a deep well before the kitchen entrance and rejoins his companions. Whilst they are eating, another man of gigantic size comes in, bearing a beam on his shoulders, and upbraids the strangers. He frightens them by throwing the beam at them, but Meriadoc attacks him and pursues him through the house and out into the woods. Whilst engaged in this pursuit, [p. 378.] about dawn he lights upon a house full of armed men who assail him. Putting his back to the wall he beats them off and kills many of them.

Having thus got rid of his assailants, he returns to the castle, but finds no one there, for his men had all fled terror-stricken and had taken his steed along with them. Meriadoc then sets out through the forest alone. He comes upon a woman weeping, who relates that her husband had been slain by two robbers and she herself captured, but that she had managed to escape whilst the robbers were asleep. She promises the steed to any one who will avenge her wrongs. Meriadoc accepts the offer and slays both the robbers. Later on he meets the knight who had guided them to the castle and tells him of the loss of his companions. They go on until they come upon a band of men in a plain, who turn out to be Waldomer and his companions. [p. 379.] The re-united company now advance about three miles further, when they hear a great noise. Meriadoc fears another adventure with supernatural beings and sends forward two of his followers to discover what is the matter. They had not gone far when they emerge from the wood and find themselves witnesses of a fierce combat. From a boy nearby they

learn that the opposing forces are those of the emperor and Gundebald, [p. 380.] and that the former had been led hither by the Black, Red and White Knights in search of Meriadoc, and had been ambushed in this spot by Guntramn, brother to Gundebald and ruler over the country hereabouts. The messengers return with this information to Meriadoc, who divides his company into two bands and unexpectedly attacking Guntramn and his men routs them completely. [p. 381.] He pursues the fugitives, slays Guntramn, lays waste his lands, takes possession of his cities and sends back word to the emperor of his achievements. The emperor writes back that Meriadoc may retain all that he conquers for himself—moreover, that if he is able to recover his daughter, whom Gundebald had carried off, she shall be his wife. Meriadoc determines to show himself worthy of these favors and sets out with his three chosen companions for the neighboring kingdom of Gundebald. He had already received from the captive princess messages similar to those which he had received from her father, [p. 382.] advising him, moreover, that her rescue was to be achieved rather by stratagem than by force. They set out, but have to pass through a wood in which they wander about some days. On the evening of the fifth day they meet on the edge of the woods a drove of beeves returning, as it seemed, from pasture. Meriadoc infers from this that human habitations are at hand and he sends forward the Black Knight to the top of a hill in front of them to see if he can discover any place where they might lodge that night. The knight comes back and reports that a beautiful walled town is in sight. They advance and learn from a man in a field over the hill that this is the chief city of Gundebald's kingdom and the one where the emperor's daughter is kept confined—also that no one is allowed to enter or leave it between sunset and sunrise. The herdsman directs them, nevertheless, to follow him and his drove. They gain entrance without difficulty to the suburbs and next arrive at the city gates. [p. 383.] When challenged by the

gate-keeper, Meriadoc relates that he is of British origin and has come to offer his services to Gundebald, who, as he hears, is at war with the emperor. The gate-keeper replies that owing to frequent insidious attempts of the emperor's men and the necessity of guarding the princess no one was allowed to enter the town save by the especial command of the king or prefect. Meriadoc asks him to go to the prefect and seek this permission, but he refuses. The persistence of the strangers excites the gate-keeper's suspicions, so that he bids them depart and is about to close the gate but Meriadoc pushes it back so violently with a blow of his foot that the gate-keeper is knocked down. [p. 384.] Meriadoc hurls him into the river that flowed about the town and then makes his companions go in.

Now the princess had been standing by the window in a tower nearby with two of her maidens, looking out on the beautiful landscape, and so had become a witness of the above scene. Suspecting that the chief of the strangers was Meriadoc, she despatches a messenger to find out. When she learns that her suspicion is correct, she sends for him to come to her tower and directs him to represent himself as a man seeking service under Gundebald. Both the king and his prefect are away and in their absence the princess governs the city. Meriadoc is brought before her, and, concealing his name from all but those who are in the secret, he pretends that he and his companions have come to aid the king. The princess entertains them handsomely for two days. [p. 385.] On the third day she relates how eager she is to be freed from her captivity, notwithstanding the kind treatment she has received from Gundebald. She then broaches to Meriadoc her plan for overcoming the tyrant. He is to seek admission to the band of Gundebald's knights, but it was the latter's custom to admit no one to this company [p. 386.] before he had tested him in single combat. This combat would take place on a certain island in the Rhine, which was about fifteen miles long on every side and was known as the land from

which no man returned. It was so-called, because, except for a space about a mile and a half square in the centre, it consisted of a great marsh on which nothing could stand and which was totally destitute even of vegetation. By driving piles into the marsh Gundebald had constructed wonderful causeways leading to the central space and in that spot he had erected a splendid palace and laid out the most beautiful gardens. The causeways crossed each other at right angles in the very centre of the island and were so narrow that two people coming opposite ways could not pass each other. At each of the four points where the causeways left the island Gundebald had erected fortified towers. [p. 387.] When he wished to put to the test any one who applied for admission to his company of knights, the applicant had to advance along this causeway from one of the four towers and sustain the shock of an encounter with the lord of the island. If he fell into the marsh, he would surely be engulfed by the quicksands, and as a matter of fact no one as yet had ever survived the encounter. Gundebald is largely dependent for his success on a wonderful Arabian steed, but the princess promises her champion a brother to this steed which is even stronger, [p. 388.] and at the same time presents him with a superb suit of armor which Gundebald had left with her. Meriadoc meets the king at one of the four above-mentioned towers and agrees to the usual terms of the contest. He conceals his steed until the day of the combat. On that day when Gundebald perceives him advancing on the dreaded steed he grows pale and calls out that he has been betrayed, for it had been prophesied that he could not be overcome in single combat save by a man who rode upon this steed. The combatants rush together and Gundebald and his horse are thrown over into the marsh, from which they never emerge again.

Meriadoc now goes on to the palace in the middle of the island and in accordance [p. 389.] with the terms agreed on before the combat all of Gundebald's men there offer him

their allegiance. He sends for his three favorite knights, and the chief men of the surrounding towns also come in and make him ruler over the land. Meriadoc, however, explains that he has been waging war on the emperor's account and in order to rescue the princess who has been promised him in marriage—consequently, that all his conquests must be transferred to the emperor. The chief men object to this, [p. 390.] but finally consent to accept the authority of the emperor, if he fulfills his promise of giving his daughter to Meriadoc in marriage. Meriadoc then returns to the princess who receives him in triumph.

In the meanwhile, however, a great war has broken out between the emperor and the king of Gaul. The emperor finds himself hard pressed and is forced to conclude peace with his enemy on the condition that he would give him the hand of his daughter already promised to Meriadoc. This arrangement he keeps concealed from Meriadoc—[p. 391.]on the other hand, he sends him messages, commending his valor and promising him rewards, and also orders him to bring to court his daughter and all the nobles of the land he has conquered. Meriadoc, unsuspecting, calls together a council of the chief men and they agree to go. He sets out with the princess and a great host of men [p. 392.] and they are met by the emperor who receives him together with the nobles in his palace, but disperses the rest in places round about, in order to cut them off from their leader. The emperor himself had taken the precaution of bringing together a large body of men on his own side. He at once puts his daughter in a tower and surrounds her with guards, but he allows Meriadoc to visit her freely, in order that he may find an opportunity of bringing accusations against him. Spies soon report that Meriadoc has been seen indulging in undue familiarities with the princess, and accordingly the emperor, without announcing his object, calls together a council to which Meriadoc also is summoned, and after first discoursing on the liberality which he had always displayed towards

his men [p. 393.] and recounting his past favors to Meriadoc especially, he accuses the latter of having rewarded his benefits by [p. 394.] seducing his daughter and ends by asking the judgment of the nobles. Meriadoc springs forth to defend himself from these charges, but armed men whom the emperor has kept in concealment near at hand rush out and arrest Meriadoc and his companions. At the same time four legions are despatched through the villages round about to quell any possible uprising of Meriadoc's men. Taken by surprise they surrender in large numbers without opposition. When the princess hears of these events she is profoundly afflicted, but is confident that Meriadoc, if he once escapes, will take full vengeance on his enemies.

On the twentieth day after this the king of Gaul comes to marry the princess, but discovering that she is pregnant he renounces the marriage [p. 395.] and renews his war on the emperor. A day is appointed for a battle which is to settle the question of superiority between them.

In the meanwhile, partly on account of the war and partly on account of the emperor's remorse, Meriadoc is more laxly guarded. One evening accordingly he tears up his clothes and makes a line by which he lets himself down from a window to the ground, crawls along the ground to escape the notice of the watch-dog, climbs the wall and escapes to the house of a friend nearby. After resting there three days [p. 396.] he goes off to the place where the battle is impending. He ranges himself in the front rank of the forces of Gaul and slays so many of the emperor's chief men that the emperor himself in desperation attacks him, but suffers the same fate. [p. 397.] The king of Gaul observes the valor of this knight and has him summoned before him. When he learns that it is Meriadoc, he promises to reward him with the hand of the princess.

On the emperor's death his army is put to flight and afterwards surrenders to the king of Gaul. The king now redeems his promise and gives the princess to Meriadoc in

marriage. He also restores to Meriadoc every thing that the latter had gained by conquest and adds other great possessions besides. Finally he makes him second to him in authority over all his dominions. A son is born to Meriadoc, from whom many kings and princes are descended. Meriadoc himself lived to enjoy an honorable old age.

J. DOUGLAS BRUCE.